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CHURCH FOLKLORE

*A Record of some Post-Reformation Usages in the
English Church, now mostly Obsolete*

BY

THE REV. J. EDWARD VAUX, M.A., F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF "SERMON NOTES," "THE PREACHER'S STOREHOUSE," "PREACHING, WHAT TO PREACH,
AND HOW TO PREACH," ETC. ETC.

"Many precious rites
And customs of our rural ancestry
Are gone, or stealing from us."
Wordsworth.

"We must not quarrel for a blot or two,
But pardon equally to books and men
The slips of human nature, and the pen."
Byron.

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GRIFFITH FARRAN & CO.
NEWBURY HOUSE, 39 CHARING CROSS ROAD
1894

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To
THE MEMORY
OF
MY MOTHER,
A DEVOUT CHURCHWOMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

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PREFACE

At the outset I must ask those who are good enough to read this book to understand distinctly that its contents are merely intended for the amusement, and perhaps for the information, of the ordinary public, and that they are in no sense addressed to scientific antiquaries.

When I began to search systematically into the local religious habits and customs of the past, the extent over which the subject reached was quite unknown to me. It was arranged with the publishers that the book should be but small in size in order that its price might be such as would suit the general body of church folk who would be likely to be interested in the subjects with which it deals.

But herein has lain a difficulty. The very large quantity of matter which came to hand has rendered the task of selection somewhat puzzling. This difficulty, I fear, has been but imperfectly met.

Everybody will see that, in this small volume, the fringe only of the subject dealt with has been touched; yet, as an item in the history of religion in England, such matter, if more fully recorded, would seem to be by no means unimportant. If those who read the volume agree with this last statement, I venture to ask them to help towards an amplification of this book in case a second edition should be called for, by sending to me descriptions of any curious local Church customs, obsolete or otherwise, which may be known to them.

In this connection I may add that, in dealing with such a variety of material, I cannot guarantee that, in all cases, accuracy has been secured. I shall be grateful to any reader who discovers a positive error in what I have stated as a matter of fact, if he will inform me of it, and I shall be pleased to correct it if I have the opportunity of doing so.

It will be noticed that a large portion of this volume consists of matter which has been sent to me by private correspondents as distinguished from the items which have been gathered from published sources. To all such contributors, known and unknown, I beg to tender my warm thanks. There are some, however, who in one way or another have rendered me so much help that I feel bound to accord to them a more direct expression of gratitude. I would specially mention Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite, F.S.A., and the Revs. W. J. Frere, Bowyer Vaux, and Edgar Hoskins.

The readers of the *Newbery House Magazine* in 1892 will recognize some portions of the contents of this volume as having appeared in the pages of that periodical.

J. E. V.

CRONDALL, HANTS,
December, 1893.

P.S.—When too late for correction I see that the expression “under the gallows” with reference to a convict (page 63), must simply mean that he communicated on the morning of his execution.

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ELIZABETH	-	-	-	-	-	1558—1603
JAMES I.	-	-	-	-	-	1603—1625
CHARLES I.	-	-	-	-	-	1625—1649
COMMONWEALTH	-	-	-	-	-	1649—1653
OLIVER CROMWELL	-	-	-	-	-	1653—1658
RICHARD CROMWELL	-	-	-	-	-	1658—1659
CHARLES II.	-	-	-	-	-	1660—1685
JAMES II.	-	-	-	-	-	1685—1688
WILLIAM III.	-	-	-	-	-	1689—1702
ANNE	-	-	-	-	-	1702—1714
GEORGE I.	-	-	-	-	-	1714—1727
GEORGE II.	-	-	-	-	-	1727—1760
GEORGE III.	-	-	-	-	-	1760—1820
GEORGE IV.	-	-	-	-	-	1820—1830
WILLIAM IV.	-	-	-	-	-	1830—1837
VICTORIA	-	-	-	-	-	1837—

CHURCH FOLKLORE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH FABRIC.

WHEN we search into the religious records of the past we cannot help being, at times, painfully struck with what appears to us a gross disregard to the sacredness of the consecrated buildings in which our forefathers assembled for worship. No doubt we owe a good deal of this to the influence of the Puritans, but it must be remembered that not a little of it was handed down to us by our pre-Reformation ancestors. So long as the chancels and chapels in which the sacred rites were performed were kept from profanation, a degree of licence, utterly at variance with our modern ideas of reverence, or even of the most ordinary degree of propriety, was permitted, and the naves of our cathedrals and parish churches seem to have been regarded as the common homes of the people. Hence we find them made use of for a variety of secular purposes. Everybody has some sort of idea about "St. Paul's Walk" as a fashionable promenade in olden days, though they may not have any very distinct notion as to what took place there. As a matter of fact, it was the favourite place for gallants to meet their mistresses, and where fashionable loungers idled away

their time chattering about the latest scandal in "society," or other current topics of interest. Hence, according to Dr. Brewer, was derived the well-known phrase of "dining with Duke Humphrey, of which Dickens makes a humorous point in describing the antecedents of Diggory Chuzzlewit. It signifies, of course, having no dinner to go to. Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, uncle to Henry VII., was renowned for his hospitality. At his death it was reported that a monument would be erected to his memory at St. Paul's, though he was buried at St. Alban's. When the more fortunate promenaders left for dinner, the poor stay-behinds, who had no dinner to go to, used to say to the gay sparks who asked if they were going, that they would wait a little longer, and look for the monument of the good Duke. The fashionable hour for these promenades was as well defined as that now observed by West End folk in London when preparing for the afternoon drive, or for the canter in Rotten Row. The nave of St. Paul's was the generally recognised resort where those in "society" met, to see and to be seen. The naves of churches in pre-Reformation times were places where tradesmen assembled for bargain and barter, where lawyers had interviews with their clients, where owners of property deposited their goods, and where divers courts of justice were held.

As regards St. Paul's Walk, Mr. Abbey tells us¹ that "it was not only the recognised resort of wits and gallants, of men of fashion, and of lawyers, but also, as Evelyn called it, a stable of horses, and a den of thieves, a common market, where Shakespeare makes Falstaff buy a horse as he would at Smithfield."² Usurers in the south aisle, horse-

¹ Abbey and Overton's "Church of England in the Eighteenth Century," vol. ii., p. 419.

² This is not quite correct according to my reading of the passage, which runs thus:—"Falstaff—'Where's Bardolph?' Page—'He's gone to Smithfield to buy your worship a horse.' Falstaff—'I

dealers in the north, and in the midst all kinds of bargains meetings, and brawlings. Before the eighteenth century began, Paul's Walk was in all its main features a thing of the past. Yet a good deal more than the mere tradition of it remained. In a pamphlet published in 1703, 'Jest' asks 'Earnest' whether he has been at St. Paul's and seen the flux of people there. 'And what should I do there,' said the latter, 'where men go out of curiosity and interest, and not for the sake of religion? You shopkeepers assemble there as at fall change, and the buyers and sellers are far from being cast out of the temple.'" At Durham there was a regular thoroughfare across the nave in 1750, and similarly at Norwich until 1748, when Bishop Gooch stopped it. The naves of York Minster and of Durham Cathedral were fashionable promenades. The Confessor's Chapel at the Abbey made on occasion a convenient playground for Westminster scholars, who were allowed as late as 1829 to keep the scenes for their annual play in the triforium of the north transept.

I understand that¹ the representatives of the Vavasour family have a traditional right to ride on horseback into the nave of York Minster, on the ground that an ancestor of theirs granted freedom of carriage through his land for stone used in the building of the cathedral. What authority there is for the correctness of the statement I cannot say.

Mr. J. C. Jeafferson, when discussing the question as to the continuance of the old custom of holding the ecclesiastical courts in churches, is not quite accurate in stating, as he does in his "Book about the Clergy,"² that the Com-

bought him in Paul's, and he'll buy me a horse in Smithfield, an' I could get me but a wife in the stews, I were manned, horsed, and wifed.'"—"Henry IV.," part ii., act i., sc. 2.

¹ *Notes and Queries* (1857), p. 418.

² Vol. i., p. 341.

missary Court of Surrey still holds its sittings in the church of St. Saviour's, Southwark. The rector tells me that the Ladye Chapel is a "consistory court," and it was there that the "Anglican martyrs" were tried in 1555. The Chancellor of the Diocese still holds his courts there to consider and decide upon disputed applications for faculties.

It is worth while, in passing, to state that one of the charges made by the Puritans against Laud was that he forbade the justices of the peace to hold their court in the church at Tewkesbury because it was consecrated ground.

But, as regards the irreverence spoken of above, it is only right to state that those in authority were fully alive to the scandals which were rife, and that their wish was to put a stop to them. But even Henry VIII., with all his persistent energy and undoubted power, was unable to check the prevailing licence, and his injunction that no person should abuse the churches either by eating, drinking, buying, selling, playing, dancing, or with other profane and worldly matters, seems to have been practically still-born. His edict had especial reference to what were known as "Church Ales," and the like. These parochial gatherings and merrymakings continued for many years after this king's reign, and throw no little light upon the customs of our forefathers. A brief description of them will, therefore, be interesting.

The Church Ale, or Whitsun Ale, as it was sometimes called, from the festival during which it was usually held, was quite an institution in olden times, and seems to have been carried on in a very systematic, if not, according to our ideas, in a very seemly manner. Two wardens were generally chosen to superintend the preparations, and sometimes there was a lord and a lady, as in the churchwarden's accounts at Brentford, in 1674, appears an item:—"Paid to her that was lady at Whitsontide, by consent, 5 shillings."

At such times collections of money were made for church purposes. Stubbes in his "Anatomy of Abuses," 1585 gives the following account of "The Maner of Church Ales in England :—

"In certain townes where dronken Bacchus beares swaie against Christmas and Easter, Whitsontide, or some other tyme, the churchwardens of every parishe, with the consent of the whole parishe, provide halfe a score or twenty quarters of meult, whereof some they buy of the churche stocke, and some is given them of the parishioners themselves, everyone conferring somewhat according to his abilitie; which mault being made into very strong ale or beere, is sette for sale either in the church, or some other place assigned for that purpose. Then, when this is set abroche, well is he that can gette the soonest to it, and spend the most at it. In this kinde of practice they continue sixe weekes, a quarter of a yeaere, yea, halfe a year together. That money, they say, is to repair their churches and chappels with; to buy bookes for service; cuppes for the celebration of the Sacrament; surplusses for Sir John, and such other necessities. And they maintain other extraordinarie charges in their parish besides." ¹

In connection with the above extract it may be worth while for me to note, that it appears from Kethe's sermon at Blandford in 1570, that it was the custom at that time for the Church Ales to be kept upon the "Sabbath Day," which holy day, says our author, "the multitude call their revelying day, which day is spent in bul baitings, beare baitings, bowlings, dicyng, cardyng, daunsynges, drunkenness, and whoredom, inasmuch as men could not keepe their servauntes from lyinge out of theyre owne houses the same Sabbath Day at night."

¹ Brand's "Pop. Antiq.," Hazlitt's ed., vol. ii., p. 158.

A word or two about the introduction of this word "Sabbath," to signify Sunday, may be interesting. The elder Disraeli was probably not far wrong when he fixed upon 1554 as the date approximately when the word came to be first used in England. Mr. Govett notes that up to the present time the proceedings in the House of Lords on a Saturday are headed in the Journal as "*Dies Sabbati*." An amusing incident is recorded as having happened in Parliament when a discussion took place as to the King's Declaration respecting the "Book of Sports." In 1620 (Feb. 15th), a Bill was introduced for the "Keeping of the Sabbath, otherwise called Sunday." During the debate a certain Mr. Shepherd asserted that the Bill had been wrongly named, "for that everybody knew that the Sabbath was Saturday, wherefore, it should have been intituled, 'An Act for the observance of Saturday, otherwise called Sunday.'" ¹

There were minor festivities similar in character to that mentioned above, and used for the gathering of money, much, I presume, as are our modern bazaars and sales of work. Thus we find Clerk Ale, the purpose of which was to provide a salary for the parish clerk. As the Church Ale served to supply what we now understand by Church Rates and Poor Rates, so the Clerk Ale provided stipends for the minor officers of the Church. In a letter from Bishop Pierce to James I. there is the clause—"People sent him (the clerk) provision, and came on Sundays to feast with him, by which he sold more ale. And since these have been put down, many ministers have complained to me that they are afraid they shall have no parish clerks." ²

¹ Govett's "King's Book of Sports," pp. 17, 44.

² Govett: p. 57. I am puzzled by this reference by the author, as, so far as I can discover, there was no Bishop Pierce during the reign of James I., which extended from 1603 to 1625. There was John Piers, Archbishop of York, who died in 1594, and William Piers, Bishop of

It would be easy to enlarge upon institutions similar to the above, such as "Bid Ales" and "Bride Ales," and to show how excesses grew out of these church merry-makings, albeit they were established for a good purpose. Not the least memorable of these jollifications which conduced to scandal were the funeral banquets, from which it appears how closely eating, drinking, and burying were connected in olden time. It is evident that a good deal of importance was attached to these funeral frolics by our ancestors, for in Strype's edition of Stowe's "London," we find that Margaret Atkinson, by her will, Oct. 18, 1544, ordered that "the next Sunday after her burial, there be provided two dozens of bread, a kilderkin of ale, two gammons of bacon, three shoulders of mutton, and two couple of rabbits, desiring all the parish, as well rich as poor, to take part thereof, and a table to be set in the middle of the church with everything necessary thereto."¹

A canon of 1571 forbade churchwardens holding banquets and public entertainments in churches; but Stubbs shows that in 1585 Church Ales, etc., were still not infrequently held there. It sounds something like a paradox, says Mr. Abbey, to assert that the exclusion from churches of all that is not distinctly connected with the service of religion was mainly due to the Puritans, of whose wanton irreverence we hear so much. Yet this seems certainly to have been the case. It may be as Mr. Abbey charitably supposes, but I should be inclined to think that the apparent scrupulousness of the Puritans was more from dislike to the festivities than from reverence to the churches.

Among what may be called church frolics in days of old, few, if any, are better known, by name at least, than that of the "Boy Bishop." This burlesque ceremonial took place

Peterborough, consecrated in 1630, but one of these was too early, and the other too late.

¹ Jeafferson: "Book of the Clergy," vol. i., p. 354.

generally on Dec. 6, the Festival of St. Nicholas, who was regarded as the patron of children. The proceedings were nothing more or less than a parody of some of the more sacred offices of the Church, and what is more, took place oftentimes in cathedrals with the full sanction of the clergy. With our modern ideas we have a difficulty in imagining how such profane buffoonery could, in any age, be tolerated, to say nothing of encouraged. Nevertheless, it continued as late as the reign of Henry VIII., when we find so respectable a dignitary as Dean Colet, in his "Statutes of St. Paul's School in 1512," prescribing that the scholars should come on Holy Innocent's Day to hear the Child Bishop's sermon, and after be at High Mass, and each of them to offer a penny to the Child Bishop.¹ This burlesquing of holy rites was discontinued in 1542, and excepting an attempt to revive it during Mary's reign, we hear no more of it.

Those who wish to learn more about the Boy Bishop will find as much as they will need in Hone's "Ancient Mysteries."

I should not have called attention to it at all had it not been that a ceremonial with which the older readers of this volume are more or less familiar—the "Eton Montem"—is believed to have grown out of it. One of the usages thereat, which was observed until the middle of the last century, was undoubtedly a survival of the Boy Bishop pageant. When the procession reached Salt Hill a boy dressed in clerical robes came forward and read prayers, whilst another boy officiated as clerk, who at the end of the service was kicked down hill by the mock parson. George III. was a great patron of the show, and encouraged it by handsome donations when the salt bearers came round; but the first time that Queen Charlotte saw this part of the frolic, she was so shocked at its irreverence that it was from

¹ Govett: p. 30.

thenceforth abandoned. As we all know, the Eton Montem was finally abolished in 1847.

But to return. Gross as was the irreverence fostered by the Church Ales, and similar profane uses to which consecrated buildings were put, it was as nothing when compared with what was done by the Anti-Roman party under Thomas Cromwell. Blunt quotes Foxe and Burnet in support of this, and shows how Cromwell caused ballads to be circulated of the most ribald and false character, and encouraged his sectarian followers to act blasphemous plays in the churches dedicated to God.¹ "This valiant soldier of Christ," writes Foxe, "the aforesaid Lord Cromwell, as he was most studious of himself in a flagrant zeal to set forward the truth of the Gospel, seeking all means and ways to beat down the false religion, and to advance the true, so he always retained unto him, and had about him such as could be found helpers and furtherers of the same; in the number of whom were sundry fresh and quick wits pertaining to his family, by whose industry and ingenious labours divers excellent ballads and books were contrived and set abroad concerning the suppression of the Pope, and all Popish idolatry." These ballads are of the most abominable kind, full of immorality and obscenity. Burnet also says that "the political men of that party" made great use of stage plays and interludes, which were often acted in churches, "encouraging them all they could," and that these plays represented "the immoralities and disorders of the clergy," and the "pageantry of their worship."² Well might Blunt add:—"The horrible coarseness of such representations of immorality, and the blasphemy of parodying the Holy Eucharist in the very House of God itself, seems not to have struck these writers."

As an instance of how long the abuses will survive, and

¹ J. H. Blunt: "History of Reformation," p. 273.

² Burnet: "Reformation," i., 502, Pocock's ed.

long custom render people blind to acts of gross irreverence, the following will be of interest.

In the *Standard* of May 24th, 1888, the following paragraph appeared :—

“ A curious custom was yesterday observed in the Parish Church of St. Ives, Hunts. Dr. Robert Wilde, who died in August, 1678, bequeathed £50, the yearly interest of which was to be expended in the purchase of six Bibles, not exceeding the price of 7s. 6d. each, which should be ‘ cast for by dice ’ on the communion table every year by six boys and six girls of the town. A piece of ground was bought with the £50, and is now known as ‘ Bible Orchard.’ The legacy also provided for the payment of 10s. yearly to the vicar for preaching a sermon on the occasion ‘ commending the excellency, the perfection, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures.’ This singular custom has been regularly observed in the Church since the death of the testator, but representations having been made to the Bishop of the Diocese, the practice of throwing the dice on the communion table was discontinued some years ago, and the raffling now takes place on a table erected at the chancel steps. The highest throw this year (three times with three dice) was 37, by a little girl. The vicar (Rev. E. Tottenham) preached a sermon on the words, ‘ From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures.’ ”

The younger ones amongst us are probably not aware that almost, if not quite, within the memory of their elders still living, strangely secular usages were not uncommon in churches. I have a letter before me in which the writer says :—“ Sir George Provost (late Archdeacon of Gloucester, and Isaac Williams’ brother-in-law) tells me that he remembers the candidate for a parliamentary election being pro-

posed and seconded in Cirencester Church." This was a common thing in many places seventy years ago.

Apart from all reverential considerations, the nave of a church would, according to our modern ideas, seem to be about as inconvenient a place for a parish merry-making as could be well imagined. But it must be remembered that, in the days of which we have been speaking, the naves of churches were to a great extent devoid of furniture, and were simply large, open spaces, such as are still to be seen in some of our cathedrals. The introduction of pews for the convenience of worshippers was very gradual. Most writers who touch upon the subject consider that these fixed seats in churches were introduced in the reign of Henry VIII., but this is incorrect, for I find a notice of their existence nearly a hundred years before his time. A will, dated 1453, is extant in which the phrase, "*Sedile vocatum pew*," occurs.¹ And what is more to the purpose, the churchwarden's accounts of the Parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, 1498-1500, contain the following entries of "Receytes of Pews" :—

- "Item R. of the wyffe of the George for hir parte of a new Pewe. iijs.
- Item R. of Wilton Wynnes for his parte of a Pewe in the trinite Chapell. iijs iiid.
- Item R. of Will^m Griffie and Thomas ffroste for licence to sette a pewe bi the chirche dore. xijd.
- Item R. of Jamys Hansettens wyfe, and Juliane Notare's wyfe for a Pewe xvjd.
- Item R. of Wynkyns wyfe for hir part of a Pewe. viij."

As for the time being I am incidentally dealing with pre-Reformation matters in connection with pews, it may be interesting if I note that certain squabbles about seats in

¹ Walcott's "Sacred Archæology," p. 443.

church which have occasionally taken place in our own days are shown to have not been altogether unknown in times long past. A correspondent to the *Penny Post*,¹ quoting, I believe, from Maitland's "History of London" (1756), tells us that, in 1417, "the Ladies Grange and Trussel, inflamed by an old grudge about precedence, being in a pew in the church in St. Dunstan's in the East, they imperiously vied for superiority, and became so shamefully outrageous that the Lord Grange and Mr. Trussel drew their swords, and not listening to any accommodation, murdered Thomas Petward, a fishmonger, and wounded many others; for which offence they were excommunicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and not absolved until due reparation had been made, both to the church and the widow of Mr. Petward."

I have met somewhere with a similar story of two ladies who, like those just mentioned, had a dispute for precedence in the matter of seats in church. This contention was by mutual agreement settled in a much simpler fashion. One of them proposed to refer the question to an arbitrator, and suggested that the rector should be appealed to. The parson, like a sensible man as he was, gave his decision that the elder of the two ladies ought to have the preference. It need scarcely be said that nothing more was heard about the quarrel.

In a print in Sparrow's "Rationale," which was published in 1697, no seats for the worshippers are visible. Possibly the sketch was from some church in either the diocese of Exeter or Norwich, of which Sees Sparrow was, in turn, bishop.

It would appear that the introduction of pews was not regarded with approval by the better part of the clergy. Latimer, who was consecrated Bishop of Worcester in 1535, disapproved of the innovation, and so did Bradford, who was Prebendary of St. Paul's about the same time, and Sir

¹ *Penny Post* (1862), p. 58.

Thomas More also spoke against them. At this time the aged and infirm used portable stools, which appear to have been employed for many years. The well-known story of Jenny Geddes hurling her stool at the head of the Dean when Charles I., at the instance of Archbishop Laud, introduced the new service book into Scotland, shows that, in 1636, fixed seats had not then become general in the North.¹

An instance of the official appropriation of fixed seats in church, in the early part of the seventeenth century, cannot fail to be of interest. The Rev. H. H. Minchin, who was Vicar of Woodford Halse, Northamptonshire, from 1855 to 1884, was good enough, during his incumbency of that parish, to send me the following extract from his Church Register :—

“Primo die Maii Anno Dni 1619.

“Memorand—it was agreed uppon the daie and yeare first above written by Mr. Hawkins Vicar John Chappell George Handcocke Churchw. John Gibbs and Richard Rowse sidesmen that Thomas Hill of Hinton and his wife their heires and assignes shall sit in the uppermost seat in the North the next unto the pue of Hugh Catesby gent as belonginge of right unto their new dwellinge Howse in Hinton for ever As may appeare more fullie by their Deede under their (several ?) handes for the better confirmacon hereof.”

“Primo die Maii Anno Dni 1619.

“Memorand—it was agreed uppon the daie and yeare first above written by Mr Hawkins Vicar John Chappell

¹ A stool, which is said to be the one which Jenny Geddes threw at the Dean, is in the Antiquarian Museum at Edinburgh. It is four-legged with a seat of woollen material, and made to shut up like what are now called “croquet stools.”

George Handcocke Churchw. John Gibbs and Richard Rowse sidesmen that the third — of the nethermost seat save one next unto the ffont and that next unto the — of the said seate butting into the middle Alley of the Prsh Church of Woodford shall for ever hereafter remaine and bee as of right unto the new dwellinge howse of Thomas Cheeckley, situate in Hinton and to his heirs and assignes for ever as more at large may appeare by their deede under their (several?) hands (delivered?) to the same Tho. Cheeckley by the above named Mr. Hawkins, Churchwardens and sidesmen."

Another entry of the same date gives the original name "alley," which we have corrupted into "aisle,"—"the seat butting into the middle alley." "Alley" is, of course, derived from the French *allée*, a passage, whilst "aisle" is from the French *aile*—a wing. To speak of the north and south aisles in a church is correct enough, because, in using these terms we do not mean to signify the passages, but those portions of the structure which are on either side of the nave, to resemble, in imagination, the wings of a bird. But to talk about the "middle aisle," by which is always meant the passage up the nave, must be wrong, as it is absurd to talk about a "middle wing."

Up to nearly the middle of the present century a pew remained in the Church of Geddington St. Mary, Northamptonshire, bearing on it the date 1602. When the church was reseated some fifty years ago the dated panel was very judiciously worked into the door of the cupboard appropriated to the surplices. There was another pew in the same church dated 1604. Although, as it would seem, pews were not infrequent in town churches during Elizabeth's reign, I imagine that they were rarely seen in country villages like Geddington, and the fact of those mentioned being dated seems to show that the church

officials were rather proud of introducing the new fashion in such a place. Indeed, considerably more than a hundred years after this—*i.e.* in 1725—Swift, when enumerating the plagues of a country life, makes “a church without pews” a special item in his list.¹ It is evident that he altered his mind as he grew older, for, in 1708 (as it is believed), he wrote his “Baucis and Philemon,” and there we have him ridiculing pews in this fashion:—

“A bedstead of the antique mode,
Compact of timber many a load ;
Such as our grandsires wont to use,
Was metamorphosed into pews ;
Which still their ancient nature keep,
By lodging those disposed to sleep.”

As strange an instance of the way in which pews have in past times been utilised that I have ever met with has been mentioned to me by Mr. Edward Peacock, F.S.A., who tells me that at Northorpe Church, Lincolnshire, until about 60 years ago, there was a small pew, just within the chancel arch, known as “The Hall Dog Pew,” in which the dogs who followed his grandfather to church were imprisoned during the service. He tells me that it was not so used during his time, but that he remembers the pew very well. He adds that it was not an uncommon thing for an aunt of his to take her dog with her to the same church. Perhaps in this connection I may be permitted to record a personal reminiscence. Some dozen or more years ago, I was in Connemara salmon fishing. The first Sunday the landlord of the hotel where I was staying kindly offered me a seat in his car to convey me to a chapel on the bog three or four miles off for the midday mass. I gladly accepted the lift. The chapel was of the most primitive kind, and the floor was but of beaten clay. When I entered, the altar rails were closely packed with worshippers,

¹ Abbey and Overton : vol. ii., p. 422.

who were, I presume, all shepherds. There was only one "pew," which belonged to the "quality," *i.e.* the landlord and his family. I preferred to kneel alongside my attendant "ghillie" (to use a Scotch term) who was there. There were a dozen dogs at least in the chapel, several of them sitting behind their masters, who were kneeling at the altar rail. One of these sheep-dogs amused me greatly. He sat most quietly through the earlier portion of the mass. As soon as the Creed had been recited, and the celebrant turned round to deliver the sermon, the dog looked up, as much as to say, "Oh, sermon time! all right," and having, dog fashion, walked round three times, curled himself up for a comfortable sleep. The sermon, which did not last more than ten minutes, being over, the dog woke up, and sat on his tail behind his shepherd master until the service was ended. There was something so deliciously human about this that I have never forgotten it. I have described the incident exactly as it happened, without the slightest exaggeration. The experience was too delightful to have escaped my memory.

It is interesting to note how soon pews came to be abused, and made to minister to man's luxury and selfishness, and how two centuries and a half ago the same complaint was made of them, as every one of us has personally heard, times out of number. Bishop Corbet of Norwich, who died in 1635, in condemning these private seats, declared that "stately pews are now become tabernacles, with rings and curtains to them. There wants nothing but beds to hear the Word of God on. We have casements, locks, keys, and cushions—I had almost said bolsters and pillows—and for these we love the church! I will not guess what is done in them, who sits, stands, or lies asleep at prayers, Communion, etc.; but this I dare say, they are either to hide disorder or proclaim pride."¹

¹ Jeafferson, "Book of the Clergy," vol. ii., p. 14.

I cannot refrain from borrowing a choice morsel from Mr. Abbey at this point. After quoting from Mr. Beresford Hope's "Worship in the Church of England" to the effect that pews in modern days had been "sometimes filled with sofas and tables, and even provided with fire-places," he remarks that cases might be mentioned where the tedium of a long service, or the appetite engendered by it, were relieved by the entry, between prayers and sermon, of a livery servant with sherry and light refreshments, adding that such an instance was once mentioned to him by Bishop Eden, the late Primus of the Church in Scotland.¹

And in connection with this question of pews, I find that until about fifty years ago a most singular custom was observed at Otteringham, a village of Middle Holderness, about seven miles from Hedon in the East Riding of Yorkshire.² This took place on the even of November 5, and consisted in what was called "Flapping the Church." Each lad in the parish having provided himself with a cord, to which was attached a stout piece of leather about six inches long, proceeded to the church, headed by the parish clerk. Being all assembled in the church, which was lighted up for the occasion, the ringers started a peal, and then the flapping began. The clerk shouted out, "Now, boys, flap away!" and then all the pews in the church were assailed inside and out by the flappers. Having threshed the pews for some time, encouraged by the clerk's cry, "Flap away, boys!" the leather weapons were generally at the end directed against each other, and the whole ceremony closed with a general steeplechase through the sacred building. At Roose, in Middle Holderness, was a similar custom, but was there called "Babbling." Also at Skirlaugh, in North Holderness, this ceremony was yearly observed.

¹ Abbey and Overton: "Church of England in the Eighteenth Century," vol. ii., p. 423.

² *Notes and Queries* (1858), p. 236.

There is another custom connected with the fabric of the church which is well worth recording. The account which I am able to give of it has been kindly furnished to me by the Rev. A. B. Timbrell, Vicar of Cradley, in Staffordshire. The substance of his letter I must give in my own words. He tells me that what is called in his neighbourhood "Clipping the Church" has prevailed for some time, although his parish is, comparatively speaking, a new one, dating from 1841, and the church was erected in 1798. The custom must therefore have been introduced in imitation of that prevalent in those parts—perhaps from Wolverhampton, as we shall see presently. The practice, he tells me, was for the children in the national schools to join hand in hand round the church, and to dance and shout. If there were not enough children in the schools to surround the church, idle boys and girls from the streets were called in. "Last year," says Mr. Timbrell, "the first of my incumbency, I continued the practice, minus the dancing, and then assembled the children on the steps in front of the church, and made them sing a hymn, and then gave them a short address, explaining the custom to mean that the church belonged to them as baptised Christians. This year," proceeds the vicar, "as there was nothing of antiquity in the custom, so far as this parish is concerned, I discontinued it, and find that I have gratified devout church people by doing so. My own impression," adds Mr. Timbrell, "is that the practice was introduced by one of my predecessors, a Mr. Jones, presumably a Welshman, who died about 1848. No such custom exists or has existed at the Mother Church of this parish, Halesowen, so far as I know."

My correspondent has been good enough to furnish me with some extracts relative to the custom of "Clipping the Church," from a book published in 1859, and written by the Rev. W. H. Jones, who was an antiquary of repute. It had to do with the parish of Bradford-on-Avon in North

Wiltshire, and the author mentions an old custom which he says had not then passed away, and which until the churchyard was inclosed, was strictly observed.

“On the morning of Shrove Tuesday, from time immemorial, a bell has been tolled. The original purpose of such tolling has, of course, been long forgotten, though, no doubt, in olden times the people were thus summoned to confess their sins to the priest, or to ‘shrive’ themselves as it was called, the especial work of Shrove Tuesday, whence it derives its name. Shortly after the bell ceased, all the boys and youths of the town, both those from the schools and those apprenticed to divers crafts—custom, indeed, had given to the latter a sort of presumptive claim to a holiday on the occasion—clustered in great numbers in the churchyard, and sought, by joining hands, entirely to encircle the church. There was, of course, on the circle being completed; the usual quantity of jumping and shouting. They called this ceremony ‘Clipping the Church.’ The term I cannot doubt is derived from the Anglo-Saxon ‘clyp-pan,’ which means, to embrace or clasp.

“What was the origin or first intention of this custom it is impossible now to say. Were it observed at the time of the festival kept in commemoration of the consecration of the church, namely on Trinity Monday, we should judge it to be a relic of the old sports and pastimes usual on such occasions. In days gone by, fairs were commonly held in churchyards; indeed, within these very few years such have been held in that of St. James’, Bristol, when the people thought little of dancing about the church. In Malkin’s ‘Scenery and Antiquities of South Wales’ we are told,—‘The custom of dancing in the churchyard at their feasts and revels is universal in Radnorshire, and very common in other parts of the Principality. Indeed, this solemn abode is rendered a kind of circus for every sport and exercise.

They play at "fives" and "tennis" against the walls of the church. They do not dance on the graves, but on the north side where there are no graves.' In the case of Bradford churchyard, the booths, at the time of the annual fair, were in olden time brought close to its limits, and the south wall of the church tower shows unmistakable evidences of having been used for the balls of the tennis players. The Boys' Dance round the church, however, formed no part of the Trinity Festival.

"It is possible that the custom we have been describing is the relic of some very ancient observance. Though we do not profess to rely on the facts we are about to mention as an explanation of this Bradford custom, yet still they lend some colour to a conjecture that its origin may be sought in extreme antiquity.

"In days when Baal (the sun) was the chief object of worship, as in ancient Britain and many other countries, a circular dance in allusion to the sun's supposed motion round the earth formed part of the ceremony. The Hindoo also used the *Ráas Játtra*, or 'dance of the circle,' in honour of Vishnu (the sun). Many British monuments, moreover, are in circular form, as Stonehenge, Abury, etc. Stonehenge was called 'the Giant's Dance,' and a circle in Cornwall is termed 'Dance Maine'—dance stones. The Rev. W. Bathurst Deane relates that at Carnac in Brittany, where there are remains of an immense stone avenue and circle, the villagers are accustomed, at an annual festival held on the day of the carnival, to unite in a general dance. The dancers commence in a circle, and having performed a few revolutions, wheel off to the right or left. They call this *par excellence*, 'Le Bal;' this, he suggests, may mean nothing more than the French word *bal*, or public dancing. Mr. Scarth, however, intimates an opinion that it may be, after all, the vestige of the sacred dance of Baal, though its original meaning may be forgotten. A tradition of this

circular dancing appears in many fables respecting Druidical temples in England. The stones are said to be human beings petrified in the midst of a dance, and all the temples to which such superstitions are attached are circular. At Stanton Drew the stones are called 'The Wedding,' and one of them is especially designated 'The Bride,' and here tradition says that they were all men and women turned into stone at a wedding dance. At the St. John's Eve, moreover, called in Ireland to this day 'Beltan Fires,' they danced by night round them, carrying torches in their hands. A similar custom was observed in Cornwall.

"Though such facts as have been detailed cannot be taken as any positive explanation of the 'Boys' Dance' round the church on Shrove Tuesday, yet thus much we may perhaps infer from them, *viz.* that our Bradford custom is no doubt very old, and that it may have arisen from some ancient usage of that kind."

I suggested above that the custom of "Clipping the Church" at Cradley may possibly have been introduced in imitation of a similar custom which formerly prevailed at Wolverhampton. I gather from a printed slip kindly forwarded to me by Mr. Thomas B. Trowsdale, who has written much on local customs, that at the beginning of the present century a number of boys "at holy day time" used to collect together, and taking hold of hands, to proceed along the streets until they had gathered a sufficient number to enable them to "Clip" St. John's Church or "Chapel" as it was then called. The dancing and shouting described above then took place. The writer states that he has been informed that a similar frolic has, on a few occasions, been carried out in connection with the Collegiate Church at Wolverhampton.

In the first edition of Hone's "Every Day Book," which I have, dated 1826, there is an account of "Clipping the

Church " as a usage in Birmingham when L. S., the contributor to the volume, was a child. After describing how the charity children assembled on each Easter Monday for the ceremony, he says :—" As soon as the hand of the last of the train had grasped that of the first, the party broke up and walked in procession to the other church (for in those days Birmingham boasted but of two), where the ceremony was repeated."¹

It is well known that in ancient times the privilege of "sanctuary" was accorded to persons who broke the laws, and who were able to reach a church or other privileged place before they were apprehended. In some instances the protection extended to those who set foot within the cathedral or church precincts. Mr. Walcott, in his "Sacred Archæology," states that this privilege pertained to Durham, Westminster, Carrow, Rainsey, Crowland, Ripon, Tintern, Leominster, and Worcester. In some places the church itself only was available for sanctuary. Thus, at Hexham and at St. Gregory's, Norwich, a ring-knocker still remains on the north door. This was for the use of persons flying from justice: Alsatia, the precinct of Whitefriars, London, was the last sanctuary in use before the privilege was wholly abolished in 1624.

Haydn, in his "Dictionary of Dates" (13th edition), states that persons were secure from arrest in the following localities in London. The Minories, Salisbury Court, Whitefriars, Fulwoods Rents, Mitre Court, Baldwin's Gardens, the Savoy, Clink, Deadman's Place, Montague Close, and the Mint. He adds that "this security was abolished 1696, but lasted in some degree till the reign of George II. (1727).

I give this only on the authority of the book from which I take it.

¹ Hone's "Every Day Book," vol. i., col. 431.

At Beverley Minster there is a structure called a "Frith Stool." This is a stone seat near the altar to which attached the privilege of sanctuary. From a correspondent to the *Penny Post*¹ I gather that this seat, which is rude and plain in construction, but which I have not seen personally, has, or had till recently, this inscription:—" *Hoc sedes lapidea freedstoll dicitur—i.e. pacis cathedra, ad quam reus fugiendo perveniens omnimodum habet securitatem.*" Of course the term "frith stool" is represented by the barbarous word used in the inscription. It is supposed that a fugitive laying hold of the knockers on the doors mentioned above secured them from arrest. A similar knocker is, I understand, still extant on the western door of Noyon Cathedral, in the Department of Oise, in Normandy, some seventy miles N.E. of Paris.

Although, as has been said above, the old privilege of sanctuary was abolished in 1624, recognised customs die hard in spite of legal statutes. A curious instance of this has been mentioned to me by the Rev. C. R. Manning, Rector of Diss, in Norfolk, who tells me that, in the overseer's accounts for the year 1687 in that parish, among the disbursements of one Samuel Foulger, the following entry occurs:—

"To the wench Ellenor that laye in the church porch at several times. . . . 00 " 7 " 6."

The Rector adds: "She was no doubt a pauper whom the overseers lodged in the chamber of the porch. I do not find any similar entries. There is no tradition on the subject."

As a curious traditionary usage akin to the above, the following is of interest, as it brings down the fact of the church being regarded as a place of general refuge for the unfortunate to the middle of the present century.

¹ *Penny Post* (1875), p. 195.

The Rector of West Tofts, Norfolk, referring to a communication of his to *Notes and Queries* to the effect that a poor woman, whose relatives had gone to America, applied to him, as a magistrate, for advice and assistance, as she and her family had become houseless, and were obliged to take up their abode in the church porch, tells me that the privilege had previously been used by a family living in an adjoining parish, the members of which family had been ejected from their cottage.

Before the abolition of "sanctuary" in the older and stricter sense of the term, the church porch seems to have been regarded as a kind of place of refuge for the destitute. The Rev. W. E. Torr, formerly Vicar of Flampstead, near Dunstable, has sent me the following extract from the Burial Register of that parish:—

"Buriales—ano 1578. On y^e xxvth November buried Margerye Roadinge, a poor child."

"'52. On the xxvith November buried Robert Roadinge father unto the said childe, which bothe died in y^e church porch."

The vicar informs me that tradition says "there is a right of refuge attached to our north porch," but that he cannot verify or explain it. It was in the north porch that the two people above-mentioned died.

As there is in the above extracts some discrepancy as to the date at which the privilege of "sanctuary" was legally abolished, I think it well to give the following extract from "Phillimore's Ecclesiastical Law" for the sake of exactness:—"By 21 Jac. c. 28, s. 7, it was enacted that *no sanctuary, or privilege of sanctuary, shall be admitted or allowed in any case.*"¹

I may add that in olden days the church porch was often used as the place for the payment of debts, and other such like matters, simply because it was a very public place where there were sure to be witnesses of the transaction. I have heard of dead bodies being laid in the church porch for identification, just as they are in the Morgue in Paris.

CHAPTER II.

THE DAILY SERVICES.

FROM the number of communications which I have received from all parts of the country in answer to my inquiries, it is evident that the old custom of separating the sexes when worshipping in church has prevailed very widely till quite recent date, and indeed still prevails in certain rural parishes. The activity which has been shown in church "restoration," as it is called, which has taken place during the past forty or fifty years, has done a great deal towards getting rid of good old customs. That of dividing the sexes is one of great antiquity, as it is referred to in the "Apostolical Constitutions"—a document which may be as early as the second century, and which certainly was not later than the fourth. According to these constitutions it was the duty of the deaconesses to attend at the women's gate in the church, while the door-keepers took charge of that set apart for the men. According to Bingham (whose reference, by the way, is in my edition so faulty that I cannot verify it), St. Chrysostom, at the end of the fourth century, seems to indicate that in his day the churches were divided into two portions by a barrier of wood. In the Eastern Church it was customary in ancient times for the men to occupy the ground floor, and for the women to be in the porticos or galleries above them. It is uncertain whether in the Western Church the men or the women were on the north side of the nave, but tradition is rather in favour of assigning the north side to the women, and the south side to the men.

When noticing the similarity of principle in this matter of the division of the sexes during worship, with the divergence in practice, it is curious to remark that the same peculiarity prevails in modern times. The instances which I give, selected from a large number of examples which have been sent to me by friends, or which have been gathered from other sources, tend to show that there have been a great variety of customs in respect to this matter.

"In this part of Essex," wrote the Vicar of Thaxted in 1873, "the separation of the sexes is almost universal amongst the poorer classes, and I remember at Little Easton Church, before its restoration, Lord and Lady Maynard each had a large pew on opposite sides of the church, and they always used each to occupy his or her own pew."

As far back as 1825, says another correspondent, how long before I do not know, it was the custom to divide the sexes in the church of St. Weonard's, Herefordshire. This was done away with in 1840, or thereabouts.

Next take London. I believe I am right in saying that in the chapels belonging to the Inns of Court—Lincoln's Inn, Gray's Inn, and the Temple—the sexes are always separated. A legal friend tells me that for many years, beginning about the middle of the century, he used to go with his father, mother, and sister to Gray's Inn Chapel, and that they always parted company at the door. He went with his father to one set of seats, and his mother and sister to another, generally a gallery.

A gentleman, writing from Warwick, in 1873, says that at Marston St. Lawrence, in Northamptonshire, the squire and the males of his family or friends have always occupied one large family pew, and his wife and daughters and their lady friends the other. This custom the then squire still retained when the number was sufficient to justify it, there being sometimes only himself and his wife.

At Christ Church, Birmingham, it was formerly the rule

for the sexes to sit apart; but it was found that in modern times many families objected to it, and so, in 1860, it was abolished. But practically the custom still lingered till a dozen or more years ago, when I was in correspondence with the vicar. The majority of the men occupied one side of the nave, and the women the other, though there was nothing to prevent persons from sitting in what places they liked downstairs, and, as a matter of fact, the members of families did sit together.

The old custom at this church gave rise to a humorous doggerel, which ran thus:—

“The churches and chapels we usually find
Are places where men unto women are joined;
But at Christ Church it seems they are more cruel-hearted,
For men and their wives are brought there to be parted.”

Let us go northwards, and Mr. Elwin, who was Curate of Helmsley, Yorkshire, in 1872, stated that then the division of the sexes was preserved in a district church there, and had been customary in the parish church, until it was lost when the building was reseated about five years previously. In his letter he noted also a very curious fact, *viz.* that he once looked into a dissenting meeting-house near Cambridge, and found that even there the old church custom had been adopted, and that the men and women sat apart.

That the usage was common in Cambridgeshire the following incident will show. On one occasion, the curate of Cottenham, in that county, stopped during his sermon, as some one was talking, and said, “I hear a noise.” The occupant of a seat on the women’s side of the church said, “Please, sir, it is not us.” Curate, “I’m glad to hear it; it will be the sooner over.”¹

At Rye, in Sussex, where, in 1858, there were public

¹ *Notes and Queries* (September 25, 1880), p. 254.

seats in the "quire," the men took one side, and the women the other; but there was no such division in the nave.¹

Another illustration of the principle above referred to must be mentioned. The Rev. H. M. Fletcher, Rector of Grasmere, near Ambleside, informed me, a dozen years or more ago, that one of his then churchwardens remembered the pride which he felt on the day when, as a boy, he was allowed for the first time to pass from the women's side of the church, on which up to that time he had been used to sit with his mother, to the men's side. In his boyhood the separation of the sexes in church was sharply defined.

The following instance will recall what was mentioned above as to the rule laid down in the Apostolical Constitutions.

Formerly it was the custom at Stanton Harcourt Church, Oxfordshire, for the men to enter by the north transept door, but the Rev. W. P. Walsh, the vicar, has told me that this door was walled up in 1845, when the whole of the church, with the exception of the chancel, was restored by Dr. Harcourt, the Archbishop of York. The north transept door was at a considerable distance from the door into the nave, and had been very little used for some time previously to its being closed. At St. Mary's, Kidlington, in the same county, the north doorway, though blocked, was up to fifty years ago, known as the "bachelors' door."²

Again, referring to ancient precedents, we find that, as regards the side, whether north or south, on which the men and women respectively were accustomed to sit, it varied in different parishes. Thus, at Marks Tey, in Essex, in the middle of this century it was the custom for all the women, excepting those belonging to the rector's family and some of the large farmers, to sit together on the south side of the church, apart from the men. Then at Weston-

¹ *Ecclesiologist*, December, 1858.

² *Ibid.*, August, 1844.

birt, Gloucestershire, as the rector has informed me, the men take the south side of the aisle, and the women the north side in the body of the church.

The Rev. W. J. Frere tells me that when he was visiting at Ferring in Essex some twenty or more years ago, the men sat on the north side and the women on the south side of the nave. The north aisle was occupied by the two sexes indiscriminately. The vicarage pew on the north side of the nave seemed to be the only exception to this general rule, and on the occasion on which my informant was present, it happened to be occupied by ladies—strangers.

"I remember when I was a boy," writes Mr. F. K. Couldery of Abingdon, "a young couple coming into the church here on a Sunday afternoon and seating themselves together on the women's side. The man was soon turned out of his seat by the old verger, with the remark, uttered in an audible voice, 'We don't have no sweethearting here.'"

One or two more instances will show that there was no definite rule as to the position in church which men and women respectively occupied.

At Morchard Bishop, North Devon, the men took the north side and the women the south. The same rule held good at Hawkhurst in Dorsetshire, at Burpham in Sussex, and at West Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, and probably at dozens of other places. But then, on the other hand, at Addlethorpe and Ingoldwold, and numerous other parishes, the men occupied the south side and the women and girls the north. Thus it is evident that the principle was maintained without there being absolute uniformity in practice. Of course any number of examples of the kind might be cited, but those mentioned will be quite sufficient.

A less common arrangement connected with the separation of men and women in church must be mentioned.

Mr. F. H. Dickenson states that in Somersetshire it is customary for the men to sit in front and the women behind in church. He adds that he has seen a regulation put forth by a Diocesan Synod ordering this, but that he cannot lay his hand upon it.

At East Pennard in Somersetshire, the men occupy the eastern part of the nave and the women the western part.¹ Before the renovation of Ramsay Church, Huntingdon, the Rev. John Wise, vicar, has told me that the whole of the nave seats were given up to the poor, the men sitting on both sides in the more eastern portion and the women behind them. The same custom prevailed in certain churches near Daventry in Northamptonshire in 1846, and perhaps does still.² A gentleman, writing in 1873, states that he in that year witnessed the same arrangement in Barrington Church, near Cambridge. If necessary, I could mention other instances. At Bradford-on-Avon the men used to sit in a gallery, called the "country gallery," and the women in the body of the church.

There is a very curious arrangement at Durham Cathedral, which Mr. J. T. Fowler says dates from time immemorial. Any men who are present in the choir unofficially occupy any of the stalls which happen to be vacant, but women have certain pews set apart for them alone behind, and to the east of the stalls.

I will give one more example of the divisions of the sexes in church, as it introduces a new feature. Some twenty years ago, the Rev. Alfred N. Bull, late of Woollavington, Bridgewater, wrote to a friend as follows:—"I have officiated in churches where the separation of the sexes was very striking from all the men wearing the rustic costume of white smocks, and all the women red cloaks and black bonnets. The nave of my father's very large church at

¹ *Notes and Queries* (June 7, 1873), p. 466.

² *Eccelesiologist*, February, 1846.

Saffron Walden was always filled with red cloaks, the wearers each bringing a stool from the bottom of the church for her own use, and taking it back again after service."

Let us now go on to inquire about another custom which was common amongst church-goers, *viz.* that of bowing to the altar on entering and leaving church. In late years, this has to a great extent fallen into disuse; it was, however, very commonly observed during the last century, and it still survives here and there amongst ourselves. It need scarcely be said that bowing to the altar is precisely analogous to the usage of the Peers bowing to the vacant throne in the House of Lords. It was recommended by Convocation in 1640. I fancy that in olden times it was more usual in country places than in towns, though there is evidence in abundance to show that the practice was observed in certain cathedrals and college chapels.

Thus a writer in the middle of the last century makes a bitter moan because, "in one of the greatest cathedrals of this nation, the reader, going to the lectern to read the lesson, made a sort of obeisance to the altar, but instantly whirling about, made another at least as profound reverence to the stalls." His complaint was that the same reverence was shown to the dignitaries as was shown to God. "Shall," said he, "*viri ecclesiastici*, as some of them plainly do, refuse to pay this reverence *Domino Deo, et Altare Ejus*, and yet sacrilegiously assume it to themselves? Is this our zeal against Popery, to affect the very badge of Antichrist, who, as God, sitteth in the temple of God?"¹

A later correspondent to the same periodical, and one who held quite different opinions, scoffs at what he calls "Altar Worship," and he speaks of it as an ill custom at cathedrals.²

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, Nov., 1748.

² *Ibid.*, Feb., 1749.

This "ill custom" is still continued in some of our cathedral churches. Mr. W. A. J. Miller tells me that at Carlisle, when the bishop is present at a service, the canons conduct him to the throne, and the bishop pauses before going to his seat, and bows first to the altar, and then to the members of the chapter.

As to the habit of members of our universities making a reverence to the altar in their college chapels, a few examples only need be given. The Rev. W. Fairlie Clarke has told me that at Christ Church, Oxford, the dean and canons used to stop at the chancel door, and to turn round to the East and bow as they left the building.

And similarly, at Balliol, which in our day is certainly not distinguished for any exceptional regard for church traditions. The Rev. W. Wright, addressing me from Bournemouth some years ago, wrote:—"My father, who was elected a Fellow of Balliol in 1784, told me that Dr. Leigh, who had been head of the college about half a century, always observed the custom of bowing to the altar both on entering and leaving chapel."

In like manner the usage was known at Cambridge. Mr. Ingleby of St. Mary's Hospital, Ilford, has told me that a friend of his, a very old inhabitant of Cambridge, well remembered that Dr. Wood, who was master of St. John's College from 1815 to 1839, always, on entering and leaving chapel, used to turn round and bow towards the altar.

The Rev. J. Fenton of Ings, Kendal, stated to me that an old woman who lived in that parish always used to make a low courtesy to the altar before going to her seat in church. On referring to her custom one day she said, "Lord bless you, parson, if my father had seen that we did not make our reverence he'd a' been vexed for a week." Mr. Fenton added that this reminded him of the time when, as a lad, he went to Langdale Chapel (1827-31), for the old people all did it there. The above-mentioned old woman,

as well as others, always courtesied low at the *Gloria*. The practice of bowing, my informant says, he himself learnt from the people of Laxey, in the Isle of Man, where he had his first curacy in 1849. As to this custom I shall have something to say lower down.

Bowing, taking the word in its strict sense, was not the usage in some places where the principle was carried out. This the Rev. H. R. Bramley has told me that at Addingham, Wharfedale, where he was brought up, the men used to strike their "toppins" or foreheads as they came into church. My informant has told me, when he inquired about the custom, that the answer was simply that "it was the proper thing to do."

Similarly, I learnt from the Vicar of Garton in the Wolds, from 1850 to 1859, that it was always the custom there for the women to drop a slight courtesy, and the men to bow or touch their foreheads, turning towards the East when they entered church. They imagined that this was an act of respect to the clergyman, and were quite ignorant of its real signification. A like unconsciousness affected the minds of the dwellers at Hilton, in Cleveland, in former days, when they bowed or courtesied to the reading-desk, whether occupied or not, before entering their seats. The Ven. J. Bartholemew, who was archdeacon of Barnstaple, and died in 1866, always bowed to the altar in his church at Morchard Bishop, North Devon. He said that he had learnt it from his father, the Rev. Robert Bartholemew.

In addition to the customary reverence on entering or leaving church, I am told by a former curate of Skipsea, Yorkshire, that there the communicants on going to and coming from the altar always either bowed, plucking their forelocks, or dropped a courtesy.

As a note illustrative of the custom concerning which I am now writing, it is well worth while mentioning that the Rev. E. P. Cole tells me that he has in his possession a

“Companion to the Altar” bound up with a “Book of Common Prayer” dated 1770, which contains the following directions for communicants:—“As soon as you conveniently may, after receiving the cup, if there be a numerous communion, rise from your knees, bow towards the altar, and retire to your seat.”

We have seen how bowing to the East on entering church has been misunderstood by simple folk who have been in the habit of practising it. A clergyman, who has the good sense to enjoy a story which tells against himself, has put the following on record.

“Nearly forty years ago, *i.e.* about 1850, I officiated amongst a simple people on the borders of Worcestershire and Herefordshire, where the practice of bowing to the altar was not uncommon; but to me, a young clergyman from the neighbourhood of London, it was novel, and I imagined myself to be the object of reverence. I remonstrated with an aged parishioner, who gave me to understand that the reverence was made to the Almighty and not to a fellow-creature. Her decided manner at the time is vividly impressed upon my mind. A neighbour, to whom I recently related the anecdote, remarked that the same mistake was once made by H.R.H. the late Prince Consort, and that it met with a similar rebuff.¹

The Rev. J. H. Overton of Legbourne has been good enough to send me an amusing illustration of the commonness of the reverential practice which we are considering. He tells me of a pamphlet written in 1700, which is very far from being a High Church publication. It is entitled “Mrs. Abigail, or a Female Skirmish between the Wife of a County Squire and the Wife of a D.D.” Speaking of the subserviency of the poorer clergy to those who were at that time of higher social rank, the following occurs:—“This little Sir John (the chaplain), always very mannerly, arose

¹ *Notes and Queries*, August 13, 1878.

at the serving of the second course, and with a bow, *as low as to the altar*, took with him the plate he had ate on," etc. etc.

Everybody is in the habit of saying some sort of brief prayer upon taking his place in church, and no doubt some future writer on "Church Folklore" will record as an odd habit of the nineteenth century the custom of men "smelling their hats" on first entering their seats—a practice now happily almost obsolete. The Rev. R. H. Bramley tells me that formerly an old man at Skipton in Yorkshire used to say his preparatory prayer facing round in turn to each corner of his pew. Is it possible that this queer usage was somehow connected with the old familiar formula?—

" Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on ;
Four corners to my bed,
Four angels round me spread,
Two at foot and two at head,
And four to carry me when I'm dead."

Let me ask my readers to go with me a step farther. Everybody knows that outward expressions of reverence to inanimate representations of sacred things are by many in our own day regarded as alien to the spirit of the Church of England. I am indebted to the Rev. Arthur Ingleby for the following extract from a treatise against Popery, by Archbishop Wake, who, previous to his advancement to the Episcopate, had been chaplain to William III. The paragraph was as follows:—

" When the pictures of God the Father, and of God the Holy Ghost, so directly contrary to the Second Commandment and to St. Paul's doctrine, shall be taken away, and those of our Saviour and the blessed Saints be, with all necessary cautions, rendered truly the books, not the snares

of the ignorant, then will we respect the images of our Saviour and the Blessed Virgin. And as some of us now bow down towards the altar, and all of us are enjoined to do so at the name of our Lord Jesus, so will we not fail to testify all due respect to His representation."¹

Another reverential usage which appears to have been widely spread in former days was that of giving an outward expression of homage when the verse of the *Venite*, "O come let us worship and fall down," etc., was recited. It was formerly the custom for the dean and canons at Durham to kneel down in their stalls when these words were sung.² Dean Cornwallis, Dr. Durell, and Dr. Prosser used to do this. Their immediate successors only bowed, and then the custom disappeared entirely. At St. John's, Edinburgh, about 1846, the whole congregation knelt at the words cited above, and the well-known chant, *Purcell* in G, was changed into the minor key for that verse only.

The late Canon Humble of St. Ninian's, Perth, told me that throughout Scotland old people frequently bow or courtesy when they come to the verse referred to above. I fancy that it was mainly a north country custom, for amongst all the instances which I have collected, only one relates to the south of England. The Rev. G. Woolcombe writes that when, in 1854, he was curate of Thorverton, near Collumpton in North Devon, there was an old woman who could neither read nor write, and who must have been ignorant of all ritual matters, who used to courtesy at the verse in the *Venite* of which we are speaking.

There are several other parts of the church service where outward tokens of reverence were wont to be rendered by the congregation in olden times. For example, a lady at Swansea has told me that at St. Mary's Church, Brecknock,

¹ "Exposition of the Doctrine of the Church of England," p. 18.

² *Notes and Queries*, 4th Series, vii., p. 280.

bowing at the *Gloria* was formerly the custom of the older and poorer members of the congregation. Also, that at the thrice repeated "Holy" in the *Te Deum* the old women used to courtesy three times. This, adds my informant, was continued till within the last thirty years. Again, the Rev. R. Dunn, who was Vicar of Ampney Crucis in Gloucestershire from 1869 to 1882, writing twenty years ago, stated that the old women there courtesy at the *Gloria*, and at every mention of the Name of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. At St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, twenty years ago, it was customary for most of the old people to bow at the words, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ," in the *Te Deum*. I cannot say whether the practice is still kept up.

A correspondent, whose name I have unfortunately lost, wrote to me in 1880 to say that when he was at Cuddesdon, the present Bishop of Lincoln, who was chaplain and assistant lecturer there from 1858 to 1863, told him that at Stone, Dartford, Kent (so far as my correspondent's memory served him as to the name of the village), it was customary, when Psalm cl. occurred in the church service, for the whole of the congregation to say it together.

A few words must be said about turning to the East at the Creeds. I was told by the late Canon Humble that in his younger days all the congregations in the city of Durham observed this practice, and that he believed it was general throughout the country. In the city it was more noticeable from the dreadful way in which most churches were seated. The pews to the east of the desk and pulpit were arranged so that the people might face the reader or preacher. Thus the occupants had to turn right round. At Grewell, near Odiham, Hampshire, before the church was altered, there was a man's gallery at the eastern end of the nave, the seats facing westwards, and the same custom prevailed. At Alton, Hants, members of the congregation

whose seats faced westwards turned to the East at the Gospel as well as at the Creed. Mr. F. J. Ames, the postmaster at Crondall, tells me that this was discontinued in 1859. Probably the church was resealed in that year, and the whole congregation faced East.

All must have noticed that in our churches now almost everyone bows or courtesies when the Holy Name is mentioned in the Creed, but only a few make a "reverence" when it occurs in other parts of the service when the people are standing or sitting, as during the hymns and lessons. Bearing upon this, the Rev. A. G. Loftie says that in Cumberland it is the custom for every one to bow at the Holy Name at funerals, at baptisms, and at the Holy Communion when receiving, though they may not do it at any other time.

The custom of bowing at the *Gloria* mentioned above seems to have been very commonly observed in past days, and the "reverence" usually took place when the word "Son" was pronounced. In relation to this observance the Rev. G. Symonds, of Thaxted Vicarage, Essex, has drawn my attention to a book which enjoyed very considerable popularity at the beginning of the last century. It was entitled, "Devotions in the Ancient Way of Offices, Reformed by a Person of Quality." The name of "George Hickes, D.D.," appears on the title-page, as editor or sponsor, I presume, and in 1712 it had reached its fourth edition. After a direction to say the Psalms standing, it proceeds:—"At the end of every Psalm let A say 'Glory,' etc., and B 'As it was,' etc., both continuing to stand, and showing some other sign of worship by bowing the head or lifting up the eyes to Heaven. For in all devotion the exterior worship is never to be neglected, and those stiff, morose, and saturnine votists, who are so sparing of bodily adoration in our most solemn services, refusing to stand at the singing of psalms and anthems, or to bow to God before

His holy altar, act against the common notions of mankind and the nature of divine service."

In some places it was the custom for the congregation to turn to the East at the *Gloria*. This was the case at the old church in Manchester, now the cathedral, and I believe is still retained. The Rev. L. P. Welland states that at Talaton Church, near Ottery St. Mary, Devon, it was formerly the custom for people in church to turn to the West when the singing began, but to turn to the East at the doxologies. This usage was dropped through the influence of a churchwarden, who, in a late rector's time, attempted to put a stop to the custom of turning to the West. This was in 1857 or 1858. But his well-meant action resulted in the people turning to the West as before, but not turning to the East at the doxologies. Since that date the church has been repaired, the gallery removed, and the fiddles and flutes abolished. The organ is at the west end of the church, but, nevertheless, the people are gradually leaving off the custom of turning to it.

It is by no means uncommon in our own day for congregations to stand up when the Lord's Prayer occurs in the Second Lesson, but a lady residing at Bagborough, near Taunton, has told me that at the old Parish Church there was a custom for people to kneel on such an occasion. According to Mr. W. J. Hewitt, this usage was observed in Exeter Cathedral in years past.¹ In Scotland, as I was informed by the late Canon Humble, in churches of the non-juring type, the people rise when (*a*) the Lord's Prayer, (*b*) the Scriptural Canticles, and (*c*) the Angelic Salutation are read in the Second Lesson. To this I may add a statement that in Scotland it is a general custom in Episcopalian churches for the people to stand when the Ten Commandments are read in the Lesson for the day.²

¹ *Notes and Queries*, June 17, 1854.

² *Ibid.*

Another out-of-the-way custom may be noted, but I have only two examples of it, and it was probably not very commonly observed. This was for the congregation to kneel at the "Ascription" after the sermon. This was, I am told, the case at Hexham in former days, and Mr. F. J. Ames tells me that the custom prevailed at Crondall Church, Hants, until about the year 1861.

In well-ordered churches it is now the custom for the congregation to stand when the clergy and choir come from the vestry to the stalls. This is doubtless the revival of an ancient usage, for the Rev. W. Wright has told me that at Hoby, in Leicestershire, where he was in 1843, it was the custom for all the congregation to stand up when the officiating clergyman entered the church. He further stated that at Marks Tey, in Essex, in 1833, the people always waited for the rector to precede them in going out of church.

Akin to this, I learn from Mr. F. K. Couldrey of Abingdon, that formerly, as he has heard from old parishioners, it was the custom at the Parish Church there for the congregation to rise whenever the Mayor and Corporation attended the church in their official capacity.

The following note has a thoroughly pre-Reformation flavour. In the *Ecclesiologist* of November, 1845, we read:—"A correspondent assures us that, until very lately, it was the custom for the people at Stringston in Somersetshire to do obeisance to the churchyard cross."

There is, or was, an odd custom at Amptney Crucis, Cirencester. The Rev. R. Dunn, writing early in the last decade but one, stated that at the club feast on the Wednesday in Whitsun week, all the members of the club took off their hats on entering the churchyard, and did not put them on again after service until they reached the road outside of the precincts of the church. This was never done by anyone at any other time.

Let us now go to consider the question of daily prayers in our churches in olden times. There can be no doubt as to the intention of the Church of England in regard to this matter. The words: "The order for morning and evening prayer daily to be said and used throughout the year," cannot mean that it is intended to be said on Sundays only. Nevertheless, except in cathedrals and college chapels, I think it would be difficult to name a church in which the rule had been strictly observed since our present Book of Common Prayer was taken into general use in 1662 after the last revision. There may be cases where a special benefaction existed on condition that daily prayer was said in this or that church; but, outside of this, if any one can give me a trustworthy instance of gratuitous observance of the rubric I will thankfully acknowledge my error.

It is not a little curious to examine the published charges and pastoral letters issued by the bishops in the past. The reproofs and suggestions contained in them give us a tolerably fair notion of the condition of church matters in olden times. Amongst other things they show how churchmanship varied in different dioceses. Thus, by way of instance, in "A Discourse to his Clergy," by Bishop Sprat of Rochester, in 1695, the recitation of daily service is taken for granted; whereas Bishop Turner of Ely, in 1686, told his clergy:—"There is one thing more I do exceedingly long to see introduced, and would fain obtain that which the rubrick, in the true intents of it, still exacts of you,—to have morning and evening prayer every day of the week in your church, if you live upon your cure or keep a curate upon it, and not extreme far from the church. And if by any means in the world you can prevail with a few of your parishioners, which, sure, cannot be wanting in most parishes, where there are some devout gentry or persons of quality, or at least some piously dis-

posed people; and to all such I could almost kneel most earnestly, begging of them, as they love God and their own and other Christian souls, that they will do their part towards the promoting of so good a work, perhaps the best and most publick good they can ever do in the places where they live; and where there are either poor widows, who may well afford to be at prayers for those whose pensioners they are; or where there are any children taught by a schoolmaster or mistress; there it is very hard if some little daily congregation might not be found would but the minister attempt to labour it with as much application and zeal as the thing mightily deserves. Nay, better, the minister, with or without his parish-clerk, and with some of his own family, that he may say, 'when two or three are gathered together in Thy name,' than not to begin this worthy design of prayers twice a day in your churches; but where that cannot be for the distance of your houses, there to have them without fail in your private dwelling."

I have given this extract at length, because, if read between the lines, it supplies some sketchy notion of the state of our parishes at the end of the seventeenth century; but chiefly because it gives expression to the thoroughly religious sentiments of one of those noble bishops who refused to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, and suffered deprivation and poverty rather than do violence to their consciences.

The urgent expostulation of Bishop Turner does not seem to have been of much avail, for a very few years later we find his successor, Bishop Patrick, again speaking seriously to the clergy in the diocese of Ely with reference to the same subject. In a charge of his we find him appealing to them in the following terms:—"The very first thing in the Book of Common Prayer deserves to be seriously considered, where you are enjoined to say daily

the morning and evening prayer, either privately or openly. It is possible, I am sure, to observe one part of this injunction, if you cannot observe the other. That is, if you cannot procure a congregation to meet daily in the church, yet you may, and therefore ought to read the service of the Church in your own families, either privately or openly, not being hindered by sickness or some other urgent cause, which cannot happen every day."

It is worth noting that it was the "High Church" clergy who argued in favour of daily services. While Richard Baxter considered that their recitation was something more than waste of time—that it was a hindrance to more important duties—men like Sancroft, Beveridge, and Nelson were strongly convinced of its importance. There was, of course, a strong High Church reaction in Queen Anne's reign, and a very remarkable expression of enthusiasm in favour of High Church principles was manifested. I do not know anything more remarkable in post Reformation history than the record of week-day services which Paterson has handed down to us in his "*Pietas Londinensis*," and which will be found at the end of this volume.¹ Of course readers must make allowance for the change of circumstances which has taken place. With the exception of "caretakers" and "housekeepers," there are very few regular dwellers in the city now, and it is but natural that, with all our modern church activity, the list given in (say) the "*Tourists' Church Guide*" of daily services in the city now should compare unfavourably with Paterson's record. But to speak again of the days that are past, it is certain that, after the overwrought pressure of enthusiasm in Queen Anne's reign, the daily service dropped more and more into disuse. Thus Fielding, in "*Joseph Andrews*," published in 1742, relates that, on a certain saint's day,

¹Appendix I.

there was no one in the church except Parson Adams, his wife, the clerk, and a servant.

Wednesday and Friday services remained popular for some time after the daily service had to a great extent been given up. Mr. Abbey¹ tells us that Archbishop Secker, in a charge delivered by him in 1761, said that there should always be prayers on those days, and John Wesley, in 1744, wrote advocating the importance of observing Wednesday and Friday. By degrees, however, the number of churches in which prayers were said publicly on these days dwindled down.

The Rev. J. H. Overton, in a letter to myself, writes:—"I find that week-day services, especially on Wednesdays and Fridays, were more frequent, even in country places, quite late in the eighteenth century, than is commonly supposed. For instance, William Cowper first conceived the desire of making Mr. Unwin's acquaintance from seeing him every day at the daily services at Huntingdon Church. This was about the middle of the century. I was also much surprised to find that William Law, High Churchman as he was, always had some neighbours to dine with him on Fridays (the day which I thought would have been the last he would have chosen for hospitality); but I found his reason was that he thus induced them to go to church with him at King's Cliffe, where there was always service on Wednesdays and Fridays, at least as late as 1761."

No doubt the publication of Robert Nelson's, "Fasts and Festivals," in 1704, had a great deal to do with the better observance of the holy days and seasons in the early part of the last century, and the influence of the book seems to have continued for a long time. Lent, too, so far as we can judge, was fairly well observed till the end of the century, and there are those still living who can remember when it

¹ Abbey and Overton : vol. ii., p. 446.

was considered the correct thing for ladies to wear mourning during the forty days' fast.

But we cannot wonder that the lay folk had no very great regard for prayers alone when so many of the clergy themselves considered their recitation as fit only for assistant curates, and quite below the dignity of rectors and other such exalted personages. Let anyone try to imagine how things must have been when it was necessary for a Bishop of Rochester to have said in a public charge to his clergy, as Sprat did in 1695:—"Wherefore, I say again, this very commendable skill of devout and decent reading of the holy offices of the Church, is so far from being a superficial or perfunctory work, a mean or vulgar accomplishment, or a subordinate lower administration only fit for a curate, that it deserves to be placed among your ministerial endowments of greater superiority and pre-eminence." Quite at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Bishop Bull of St. David's found it necessary to warn candidates for Holy Orders against an irreverent and careless recitation of the Church Prayers—a warning, by the way, which might usefully be given now, as might also the advice given by Gibson, Bishop of London in 1724, to candidates for Holy Orders, as to the management of the voice. As to the charge of which I am speaking, perhaps the most noteworthy, from our own modern point of view, is the part devoted to what is called "Psalmody," or, as the bishop phrases it, "The Singing Psalms." His lordship draws attention to the fact that he has provided a course to serve for six months in order to help the clergy in their selection, and he especially begs them not to leave the choice in the hands of the parish clerk.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to state what Bishop Gibson meant by "The Singing Psalms," whether "Sternhold and Hopkins," or "Tate and Brady." The so-called metrical version of the Psalter which is commonly known as

"Sternhold and Hopkins" seems to have come into use about 1562, and to have continued for over two hundred years. I believe it to be a fact that even so late as 1828 a new edition of this version was published with the idea of its being used in churches. That by Tate and Brady was issued about 1698, but it was far from popular at first, and it took something like a hundred years before it secured anything like a foothold in the country. Whether it was an improvement on the "Old Version"—for Tate and Brady was called the "New Version"—is a matter of opinion. To the present generation the two versions are equally unknown, but I can well remember in my younger days the Tate and Brady Psalms being sung in country churches. It may be worth while to give an instance of the style in which the Psalter was rendered by the then Poet Laureate and his colleague. Let us take by way of example Psalm xli. 6, which runs thus:—"And if he come to see me he speaketh vanity, and his heart conceiveth falsehood within himself, and when he cometh forth he telleth it." This is made to apply to the scandal that was in those days commonly supposed to be connected with the conversation at morning calls—five o'clock teas had not then been invented. Thus:—

" Suppose they formal visits make,
It's all but empty show,
They gather mischief in their hearts,
And vent it where they go."

The teaching was, of course, delightfully direct, but whether it exactly represented what the Psalmist meant is another question.

Those who have read Isaac Williams' Autobiography may remember how he speaks of making acquaintance with the Parisian Breviary, and of his being especially

taken with the hymns. This was in 1829. Some of these he translated without any idea of publication, but simply for his own personal edification. In connection with this he speaks of the "general horror of unauthorised hymns" which prevailed among church people at that time.

Of course we must take the date of the above extract into account; but there is something very funny in the idea that because by some means or other the "New Version" had obtained the privilege of insertion at the end of prayer books printed in the early part of the century, the doggerel was "authorised" by the Church. Would any one suppose that because "Hymns Ancient and Modern" are often printed at the end of modern prayer books, this collection of hymns had been "authorised" by any recognised "authority" of the English Church? The idea is absurd.

Then as to the music to which these rhymed psalms were to be sung, the bishop remarks:—"You should endeavour to bring your whole congregation, men and women, young and old, or as many as you can, to sing five or six of the plainest and best known tunes in a decent, regular, and uniform manner, so as to be able to bear a part in them in the public service of the Church.

But what will seem to my modern readers the quaintest Episcopal suggestion is to come. The bishop goes on to say:—"Which last advantage of bringing the whole congregation to join in this exercise will be best obtained, especially in country parishes, by directing the clerk to read the psalm line by line as they go on, by which means they who cannot read will yet be able to bear a part in the singing, and even they who can neither read nor sing will receive from the matter of the psalm both instruction in their duty, and improvement in their devotion." It will be difficult for young people of the present day to imagine the possibility of such a barbarous custom as that indicated above, yet it lasted till a comparatively recent date. I

remember having, as a boy, heard the lines of Tate and Brady given out one by one, and thinking the effect curious.

In these days we laugh at the idea of such a metrical version, or rather perversion, of the Psalter being sung in church, but it ought to be remembered that the well-known hymn which is introduced into most modern "collections," "Through all the changing scenes of life," is simply the rendering by Tate and Brady of the thirty-fourth psalm. We are all familiar with "Oh, Lord of Hosts, the mighty Lord," but few who sing it know that it is merely a rhyming version of the eighty-fourth psalm, from the pens of these now despised poetasters.

A good work, however, was done by the introduction of some hymns at the end of the "New Version." Thus, "To God be glory, peace on earth," is, I believe, a translation of an ancient hymn. The favourite Christmas hymn, "While shepherds watched their flocks by night," was also included, and at the end of an old prayer book in my possession containing the "New Version," I find Charles Wesley's hymn with the first line ill-advisedly altered as we see it now in every collection except "The Peoples' Hymnal." The author wrote, "Hark how all the welkin rings." Who was guilty of changing this into the comparatively feeble, "Hark the herald angels sing," I cannot say.

If with our present habits and experience we could be thrown back into the past, we should find various other usages which would appear not only strange, but exceedingly irreverent. So far as I can gather, it was very much the custom before the reign of Charles I. for men to wear their hats in church. This was not altogether brought in by the refugees, who had before this time returned with all sorts of objectionable ideas contracted from the continental Protestants with whom they had mingled, but it had been handed down to post-Reformation people from early times.

Although this irreverent habit had to a great extent died out before 1689, when William of Orange came to the throne the Dutchman brought various reprehensible foreign customs into this country. Amongst these was that just mentioned. He gave up the habit when he found that it caused offence, but though he remained bareheaded during the prayers, he put his hat on for the sermon.

It may be worth while, in passing, to remind Protestant teetotalers that it was William of Orange who gave an impetus to the distillation and consumption of ardent spirits in this country, and recommended it in the House of Lords as a means—by taxation, I presume—of increasing the revenue. Queen Elizabeth, on the other hand, forbade the distillation of malt except in small quantities for medicinal purposes.¹

There is reason to believe that it was no uncommon thing for ladies of rank to bring their hawks into church, and to have their pet dogs following them in pre-Reformation times. It would appear that then the men were wont to wear their hats, although they generally, but not invariably, uncovered at the "Elevation of the Hosts." Alexander Barclay, "the monk of Ely," in his "Ship of Fools," published in 1509, tells us that some did not condescend to even so much reverence as that:—

"And when our Lorde in consecrate in forme of breade,
Thereby walks a knave, his bonet on his head."

Again and again in the *Spectator*, as Mr. Abbey reminds us, the irreverence common in Addison's day is severely commented on. One or two notes will be enough. If a stranger came to a church to preach it seems to have been a common thing for the members of the congregation to make gestures to one another if there happened to be any-

¹ Palin's "History," p. 218.

thing peculiar about his intonation or style, while the ladies would giggle behind their fans.¹ Or again, we have a description of the demeanour of a friend of Will Honeycomb:—"He seldom comes in till prayers are about half over, and when he has entered his seat (instead of joining with the congregation) he devoutly holds his hat before his face for three or four moments, then bows to all his acquaintances, sits down, takes a pinch of snuff, and spends the remaining time in surveying the congregation." Then again, in the *Guardian*, Steele, quite at the beginning of the last century—although, as Mr. Abbey remarks, he was very indignant at the *Examiner* having remarked upon the impropriety of the daughter of the Earl of Nottingham (who was almost mentioned by name) amusing herself with knotting in St. James' Chapel during divine service—reproves, just as the writer in the *Spectator* had done, the flirting and jaunty whisperings that often went on in church. The following passage from the sixth satire in Young's "Love of Fame," published about the middle of last century, illustrates this, while reminding us of some of the delightful photographic pictures of character which William Law, some twenty years before, had given in his "Serious Call":—

" Lavinia is polite, but not profane ;
 To church as constant as to Drury Lane,
 She decently in form pays Heaven its due,
 And makes a civil visit to her pew.
 Her lifted fan, to give a solemn air,
 Conceals her face, which passes for a prayer,
 Courtsies to courtsies then with grace succeed,
 Not one the fair omits but at the Creed."

¹ Anyone going now into the American church in the Avenue de l'Alma, Paris, will see Japanese fans lying about in the seats alongside of the soft sofa cushions with which the occupants furnish their pews.

The satire contained in the last line must not be missed.

A great deal more might be related as to the irreverent conduct of some church-goers in days of old, but it is not a pleasant subject to dwell upon, although it is necessary in a volume like this to say something about it.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

It can scarcely be doubted that it was the original intention that the pre-Reformation custom of a daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist should be continued in the English Church after she had freed herself from the shackles of Rome. The fact that the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, which belong only to the Eucharistic office, were to serve for the whole week seems decisive on this point. The words at the end of the Preface in the Prayer Book are as follows:—“Note also that the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel appointed for the Sunday shall serve all the week after, where it is not in the Book otherwise ordered.” This is in thorough accord with the rubric in the first prayer book of Edward VI., where we have—“In cathedral churches and other places where there is daily Communion, it be sufficient to read this exhortation above written (the long one in the Communion service) once a month. And in parish churches upon week days it may be left unsaid.” This practice may have been more or less kept up during the five years of Edward’s life, as also with the re-introduction of Popery under Mary. The real wrench came with the return of the Marian exiles, when Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558. The flood of Protestantism and irreverence which they brought back with them from the Continent must, under the very abnormal condition of things, have had a most baneful influence, and have done much to hinder customs which were really Catholic. Let anyone try to imagine what the religious mind of the country could have been when it was possible for Scambler, who was Bishop of

Peterborough from 1561 to 1585, to lay down a rule that a day should be set apart quarterly for general Communion—that there should be two Communion, one at five for servants and officers, with a sermon of an hour, to end at eight; the other for masters and dames, to begin at nine the same day, with like sermon, and to end at twelve.¹

But there were bishops of a higher type than Scambler, bad as were the times. Overall was consecrated at the beginning of the following century, and Cosin became Bishop of Durham in 1660. Dealing with the question of the propriety of a daily Eucharist, Bishop Cosin says, "Better were it to endure the absence of the people than for the minister to neglect the usual and daily sacrifice of the Church by which all people, whether they be there or no, reap so much benefit. And this was the opinion of my lord and master, Dr. Overall."²

And here comes in a curious fact as regards the difference of ideas entertained by really good men as to the frequency with which the Holy Eucharist ought to be celebrated. George Herbert, in his "Country Parson," published in 1632, says:—"The parson celebrates it (the Holy Eucharist), if not duly once a month, yet at least five or six times in the year, as at Easter, Christmas, and Whitsuntide, afore and after harvest, and at the beginning of Lent." To us it seems very odd, if we read this paragraph to the end, for the writer goes on to say:—"And this he doth not only for the benefit of the work, but also for the discharge of the churchwardens, who being to present all that receive not thrice a year, if there be but three Communion, neither can the people so order their affairs as to receive just at those times, nor the churchwardens so well take notice who receive thrice, and who not."³

¹ Jeafferson's "Book of the Clergy," vol. ii., p. 33.

² Quoted by J. H. Blunt.

³ Chapter xxii.

The following item seems even more strange if we take into account the date when Bishop Andrewes died (1626), and his well-known devotional habits when living. Bishop Buckridge of Rochester preached the funeral sermon for his brother of Winchester, in which the following passage occurs:—"He was Dr. Andrewes in the schools; Bishop Andrewes in the diocese; and Saint Andrewes in the closet. After he had an Episcopal house with a chapel, he kept monthly Communion inviolably, though he had received at court the same month." Mr. Benham, in commenting upon these words, says in his "History of the Diocese of Winchester:"—¹ "This is from his funeral sermon by Bishop Buckridge, or one would imagine some mistake. But the obvious intention of the Church to observe weekly Communion seems to have been greatly neglected all through the seventeenth century. A General Winsor left the interest of £100 to two churches in Southampton to defray the expenses of a monthly Communion. In 1718 there were only eleven churches in London where there was a weekly celebration."²

As I remarked above, good men who lived in bad times greatly regretted the decadence of the custom of which I am treating. Mr. Abbey writes:—"Bull, Sherlock, Beveridge, and other Anglican divines, who belonged more to the seventeenth than to the eighteenth century, had expressed much concern at the infrequency of celebrations of the Eucharist as compared with a former age. 'Now,' said Beveridge, 'people have so far departed from primitive usage that they think once a week is too often.' . . . In 1741 we find Secker admonishing the clergy of the diocese of Oxford that they were bound to administer thrice in the

¹ S. P. C. K., p. 187.

² At the present day in the city of London there is a weekly celebration in twenty-eight churches; in nine there are two celebrations each Sunday, and in eighteen a celebration on holy days as well.

year, that there ought to be an administration during the long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas. 'And if,' he adds somewhat dubiously, 'you can afterwards advance from a quarterly Communion to a monthly one, I make no doubt but you will.' . . . But Bishop Tomline might well feel it a matter for just complaints that, being at St. Paul's on Easter Day, 1800, in that vast and noble cathedral no more than six persons were found at the Table of the Lord."¹

As regards details in connection with the Eucharistic service, a fact must have struck those who have looked into the matter as being odd. I do not remember to have met with an instance of the "chasuble" being mentioned in the seventeenth century as a distinctive altar vestment in use. Everybody knows that large numbers of the higher class of churchmen in their writings asserted the legality of the ornaments rubric, but as regards actual practical use the cope only is mentioned. There is only one way that I can see by which this can be explained, and that is by the presumption that in those days the term "cope" was used to signify the altar vestment as well as that which was employed at procession and lower church functions—in other words that the "cope" included the chasuble. As regards the cope, properly so called, it would appear that copes were widely used before the Restoration, but to a considerable extent abandoned after that event. They were, however, retained at Durham, Westminster, and Norwich until nearly the end of the last century. But since their general abandonment, I believe that on great occasions, such as coronations, they have always been worn at Westminster Abbey.

As a striking instance of the retention of an old principle long after the actual practice had died out, I may mention that the late Major Fortescue, of Alveston Manor, Stratford-

¹ Abbey and Overton : vol. ii., pp. 477-79.

on-Avon, told me that his grandfather, who was a clergyman, always wore full dress under his surplice whenever he celebrated the Holy Eucharist.

Akin to this, I well remember a remark which was made to me some five and twenty years ago by the widow of Sir Charles Bell, of Bridgwater treatise fame. As a very old lady she came to live in Albany Street, Regents Park, and attended St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Munster Square. The use of the Eucharistic vestments was quite new to her, and she asked me to explain their meaning. This I did, and she at once said:—"I understand the principle exactly; you put on court dress to go into the Presence." It is impossible to conceive a briefer or truer definition.

Everybody knows that the first rubric before the office for Holy Communion in the Prayer Book directs that "So many as intend to be partakers of the Holy Communion shall signify their names to the curate, at least some time the day before." With church discipline so slack as it has been and still is in England, it is scarcely to be expected that this rule should ever have been generally observed. Yet a contributor to *Notes and Queries* states that at Bitton, in Gloucestershire, two parishioners, who were natives of Lincolnshire, used always to give this notice. It may be that in the latter county the custom has to some slight extent survived.

The custom of people communicating fasting is one which, wherever it may have existed, has evidently been handed down from remote times. There are plenty of instances of this practice to be had, dating from the last century. Thus the clergyman of a Berkshire parish states that, in 1863, an old woman parishioner told him that her mother never communicated except fasting. Another clergyman, speaking of those who had lived at Liskeard in Cornwall, states that thereabout, in the days of his grandfather, it was the general, though not the universal, custom,

both by rich and poor. Similarly this was known to be the case at Leek in Staffordshire. Speaking of an old woman, aged 83, who was preparing for her first Communion, the clergyman of her parish states that she asked whether she ought not to receive it fasting, and he adds that every time afterwards she was careful to observe the same reverential practice. Going up to the northern counties, the Rector of Winestead, Hull, has told me that people still living can remember the custom observed there, and it must be noted that in the days referred to there were, as a rule, only late, *i.e.* mid-day, celebrations. Another clergyman, verging upon 70, has assured me that his great-grandmother was very particular about fasting before reception, and that she was also strict in her observance of the Church's fast days. He added that if she was on a visit at a friend's house she would never, save under very urgent necessity, go beyond the garden before she had been to church. This is akin to the custom which still prevails in many parts of England, of a woman, after her confinement, abstaining from appearing in public until she has been to church to return thanks for her safe delivery. The late Dean of Brechin, who was an old man twenty years ago, stated that his mother invariably received the Holy Communion fasting, and would have considered it very irreverent not to do so. These few individual instances, drawn from different parts of the country, taken almost at hap-hazard from a large number of others which have been sent to me, show how the ancient reverential custom continued to be observed by religious people long before its revival under the so-called Tractarian movement.

The question as to how far daily, weekly, and early celebrations of the Holy Communion have been practised in England in post-Reformation times is one which must be of the highest interest. Upon this matter I am glad to avail myself of a valuable letter from the pen of Mr. F. C.

S. Warren, which appeared in the *Church Times* of August 24th, 1888. He says:—

“There is, I think, no evidence whatever of any constant daily celebration between the Reformation and the present time. Wimborne Minster has been mentioned as such an instance, and I was once referred to Hutchin’s ‘Dorset’ as an authority: but Hutchin’s (ii. 549) contains nothing of the kind; and the Rev. L. Lester, now Rector of Langton Maltravers, late priest-vicar of the Minster, informed me some years ago that the fact could not be established. One case can be found, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, of a daily celebration lasting for a time in London; but it was quite exceptional, and seems indeed to have been quasi-private. The celebrant was Edward Stephens, first a barrister, then a priest; he began, before his ordination, by procuring in the country parish of his residence a monthly and then a weekly celebration, which he says was rarely then (soon after the Restoration) ‘anywhere else in the nation above once or twice, or thrice at most, in the year’ He then went on in London by bringing together a band of daily communicants, with a priest whom he says he had ‘brought off from the Dissenters,’ and here they used a Liturgy of his own composition. After a year their chaplain was laid by, as it seems, through ill-health, and Stephens then took holy orders himself. What his title was, or who ordained him, we are not told, though, if it was the Bishop of London, it must, I think, have been Compton. He continued the daily celebration for nearly three years, and then gave it up. He printed his Liturgy in 1696, and it was republished in Hale’s ‘*Fragmenta Liturgica*,’ vol. ii., 1848. See the preface to that work, also the *Christian Remembrancer*, July, 1854, p. 207.

“Most of the visitation articles (dating 1563-1728) published by the Ritual Commissioners inquire whether

the Holy Communion is celebrated 'duly once a month,' and the solitary mention of a weekly celebration is by the well-known Bishop Montagu of Norwich, 1638.

"In 1633 Dr. Henry Hammond, Rector of Penshurst, restores a monthly celebration in his church ('Life before Works')

"In 1680 Dean Granville of Durham, son-in-law of Bishop Cosin, says 'the celebration of the Holy Communion every Sunday at the least is not observed in more than two cathedrals, and two or three chapels in all England.' (*Remains* published by the Surtees Society, 1865).

"In 1714 Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis* gives a list, quoted in Stephens' 'Common Prayer with Notes,' i. 317, of the services in 151 London churches and chapels. The Holy Communion was celebrated monthly, at least, in all but two of these; in one twice a month, in eleven weekly, and in one more weekly from Easter to Trinity; in ten there were early celebrations, of which ten two were thrice a month, one twice, three once, two on great festivals, one on holy days, the remaining one being at Whitehall Chapel, where it is called 'private' as against the 'public' late one. There are several cases of two celebrations on great festivals, and one of daily celebration in their octave, four of celebration on Good Friday.

"In Professor Sedgwick's privately printed history of his father's parish of Dent, Yorkshire, he mentions an early Easter celebration at the end of the last century, and lasting far into this. There was another in 1836 at Meifod, Montgomeryshire, where the father of Dr. Rowland Williams was vicar.

"In 1793 Mr. Beste, afterwards a Roman Catholic, speaks in a university sermon on Priestly Absolution of 'those four days in the year on which the Lord's Supper is administered in our parochial churches;' and as late as 1853 the present Bishop of Carlisle, in the preface to his

Eucharistic sermons, speaks of 'the commonly rare celebration in the great majority of parishes.'

"The first daily celebration in modern times I believe to have been begun by Mr. Prynne of St. Peter's, Plymouth, about 1850; an early celebration was begun by Mr. Wilson of Islington about 1828, and an evening one by Dr. Hook about 1844. My authority for these two latter strange facts (of which the second was probably alluded to by 'Exul's' Irish D.D.) is a letter in the *Guardian* of 7th July, 1886. See also a letter in Williams' 'Life of Suckling,' about 1845, p. 17."

I learn from the Rev. S. C. Baker that an ancient custom of having a celebration at six o'clock on Christmas morning is kept up at Usk in Monmouthshire. The country people come in from distant parts of the parish to this early service, and some communicate who do not at other times. It is called "Pwlgwn" in Usk, in other places "Plygain." Some say the former word means "cock-crowing," and the latter "early day" in some old form of Welsh.

The Church of St. George the Martyr, Bloomsbury, was built in the reign of Queen Anne. The rector states that ever since it was opened the Holy Communion has been celebrated every Sunday after the Mattin's service.

The Rev. J. T. Fowler tells me that it has been an immemorial custom at Ripon Minster to have an early celebration on Easter Day, but on no other day in the year. Ripon was a very large parish, and in mediæval times the dwellers in outlying chapelries were expected to receive their Easter Communion at the Minster.

There have been certain peculiar usages connected with the act of communicating kept up in some places to within living memory, and which, perhaps, still survive here and there. A few examples may be given.

An old Orial man tells me that when he was at Oxford in 1864, it was the habit for as many undergraduates as sufficed to fill the altar rail to take their places there just before the short exhortation in the office was recited. Again, the Rev. W. F. Clements states, that at St. James', Isle of Grain, Kent, at the words, "Ye that do truly," etc., the communicants left their seats, went into the chancel and knelt down there, the men on the north and the women on the south side, and remained there until the priest came to communicate them. A similar custom prevailed at Wannington in Northamptonshire, at least as late as 1845. This usage, with certain slight differences of detail, was very common in all parts of the country. A clergyman has told me that at Skipsea in Yorkshire, in 1856, they not only did this, but the remainder of the congregation, the children excepted, stayed in the church till the end of the service. This latter fact is interesting as indicating a survival of the ancient custom of non-communicating attendance at the Eucharistic service. At Christ Church, Oxford, up to 1856, it was the custom for the communicants to remain in their seats while the officiants walked round to communicate each. Dr. Pusey frequently administered in this way.

The Rev. R. Noble Jackson, Vicar of Winchcombe, Gloucestershire writes:—"When I first came here, in 1871, the altar table retained the old Puritan arrangement, surrounded on north, east, and south by a kind of pew back with a ledge thereon (facing in each case outwards) for books, and with seats ranged along the wall, and matting at the back to keep the damp off the clothes. In front were painted railings where the common people knelt to receive the Sacrament, while the quality occupied the seats around. Somewhat akin to this was the arrangement in the chancel at Leonard Stanby, Gloucestershire. A former curate of the parish tells me that up to 1866 it was the custom to

administer the Holy Communion inside of a square formed on three sides by high-backed 'settles,' on the seats of which the communicants knelt. A more usual arrangement was to have the rails round the three sides of the altar which were available for communicants. Up to about 1850 this was the case at Fenny Compton in Warwickshire, for instance; but hundreds of other examples could easily be cited. Indeed, it is only worth mentioning as being an arrangement which, if it has not already died out, will do so in the course of a generation or two, and all remembrance of it be lost."

In some places it was the custom for the sexes to communicate separately. Let me take as examples three parishes fairly remote from one another. This was, and perhaps still is, the usage at Churchdown, between Gloucester and Cheltenham,¹ and a lady friend tells me that it prevailed in 1850 at Bekesbourne in East Kent. Here the women went up first. Going northwards to Nassington Church, Northamptonshire, we should find, I believe, to the present day, that as soon as the priest has communicated, the women approach for reception. The men do not leave their seats till every woman has returned.

At Swanage in Dorsetshire there was a different usage. It was the custom there for twelve of the oldest men who were communicants to go up together to the altar before the rest of the people. The rector has told me that this continued until about 1860.

And as I am now speaking of the act of communicating, this will be the place to mention a fact stated in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of February, 1732. It is there recorded that one Hallam was executed at Tyburn for the murder of his wife. "Hallam denied the flinging of his wife out of the window, and took the Sacrament upon it

¹ *Notes and Queries*, September 30, 1871.

See no
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under the gallows." A curious question arises here. Did the priest celebrate "under the gallows," or was the Sacrament reserved and taken there?

I am told that in Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire it was the custom for all those present to kneel through the whole of the Communion service. This was also the case in certain parts of Herefordshire, as at St. Weonard's and Michael Church. In the former of these two parishes, up to about 1834, Holy Communion was celebrated only four times a year, Easter, and its octave, Low Sunday, being two of them. This is curious, as it shows a desire on the part of the clergy to carry out the directions of the Prayer Book, that every parishioner should communicate at Easter. They at least gave him an opportunity of doing so.

A clergyman informs me that he understands that in former days the whole congregation at Vale Church, Guernsey, used to communicate, as a matter of course, when there was a celebration. The question naturally arises, whether this was not a quasi-survival of the old custom of all persons attending Mass?

At the present day, as everybody knows, it is the custom of communicants, when receiving the chalice, to take merely a tiny sip from it; but this seems not to have been the case in times gone by. As an illustration of this, it may be mentioned that the plate in Minsterley Church, Shrewsbury, consists of two large flagons, two chalices, each capable of holding about three pints, and two patens, all inscribed, "The gift of the Right Honourable y^e Lady Thynne, Anno Dom. 1691." If full, there would be room in the vessels for ten pints at least, and the church was built only as a private chapel to the hall, and is still a chapelry in Westbury parish. It will hold about two hundred people, and there were probably never more than twenty communicants. More will be said about this matter later on.

In treating of the various old-fashioned usages connected with the Eucharistic office, I have not found it convenient to adhere to the order of the service, but as this book does not profess to be a connected treatise, but is merely a collection of notes, the lack of strict sequence is a matter of little importance. The few items which have yet to be added can easily be arranged in a more orderly fashion.

First, as regards the altar arrangements in the Channel Islands in years gone by. There seems to have been no decent table or altar for Holy Communion in most of the churches of Jersey, even as late as the middle of the present century. At St. Heliers, for instance, the "Oyster board was kept in the porch, and only brought in on Communion Sundays." In Guernsey matters were somewhat better. Each church had a place set apart for the holy table, though that place was not always in the chancel. Sometimes it was at the east end of a chancel aisle, and in one case in the chancel, but westwards of a block of pews.¹

Then as to the eastward position. Although, no doubt, in the earlier part of the present century, the custom in nearly every church was for the officiant to stand at the north end of the altar, there were exceptions to this. A clergyman writes to me to say that the Rev. W. Hepton of Bishops Frome adopted the eastward position during the Consecration Prayer throughout his priestly life up to the time of the Purchas judgment, when he abandoned it. When asked, he replied that he did it simply because he thought it was the meaning of the rubric. This clergyman was ordained priest in 1826.

At Foy, in the county of Hereford, the eastward position was the rule sixty years ago certainly, how much longer I cannot say.

Again, at Weston Beggard Church in the same county,

¹ *Ecclesiologist*, ix. 176, x. 73.

the altar is railed round on three sides so as to leave scarcely any room for a priest to squeeze himself between the north end and the rail, and it has been customary for the incumbent to officiate "before the table" without any thought or suspicion of Ritualism. I am speaking now of fifty years ago. Further, I learn that at Ings, near Kendal, the altar was so arranged in 1773, that only the eastward position was possible.

The office of "server" has survived longer than most people imagine. Up to a few years ago at Lower Sapey Church in Worcestershire, when the clergyman left the reading-desk at the end of the morning prayer, and took up his position at the altar, it was the custom for the clerk also to go within the rails.¹ A similar custom is reported by the Rev. F. G. Lee, who states that up to 1840 or thereabouts, the habit of the clerk taking his place with the priest at the altar existed in many churches in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. He knelt either within or without the rails, and in some cases wore a surplice.²

In the *Guardian* of May 31st, 1876, certain items are given showing that a like custom prevailed formerly in the north of England.

Thirty or forty years ago (wrote Mr. Bowman in 1876) it was usual in the Bristol churches for the men to stand during the Communion service till the reading of the Epistle, and the children in one of the endowed schools in the city (the Red Maids) are still taught to do the same.³

A gentleman at Bampton, where there is a very fine cruciform church, has told me that it is the custom there for the minister during the Communion office to leave the altar, after having read the Epistle, and go westwards down the church until he reaches the easternmost of the

¹ *Notes and Queries*, May 1, 1880.

² *Ibid.*, June 26, 1880.

³ *Ibid.*, August 26, 1876.

arches which support the tower (standing at the junction of the arms of the Cross), and from this spot he reads the Gospel and Nicene Creed ; he then goes further on to the westernmost of the tower arches, and gives out whatever notices there may be. This is probably a quasi-survival of the ancient usage of reading the Gospel from the rood loft.

As the sermon, according to the Prayer Book, is to be preached during the Communion office, this seems the place to note a peculiar usage in relation to it. At Church-down, Gloucestershire, already mentioned, it was customary up to 1871, and may be still, for the male labourers to stand during the sermon.¹

We now come to the offertory, and the way of collecting the offerings of communicants in days gone by.

In the village of Stretton, Rutland, writes "Cuthbert Bede," it has been the custom from time immemorial, and is still the custom, for every communicant to place a silver piece of money in the alms basin. However poor the communicants may be, yet a threepenny or fourpenny piece is obtained by changing coppers for that express purpose at the village shop.

And similarly at Over, Cambridgeshire, if one should say to a poor person, "Give a penny if you can't give more," the answer often was, "Oh, we don't give coppers here ; they do at Swavesey (the next parish), but no one does here." At extraordinary collections not in connection with the Holy Communion coppers are given freely.²

The parishioners at Crosby Ravensworth in Westmoreland do not seem to have been so scrupulous, for I understand that there the alms of the Holy Communion are sometimes called "Oblation Brass."

According to a clergyman who has written to me, the

¹ *Notes and Queries*, September 30, 1871.

² *Ibid.*, December 6, 1873.

Dublin people do not seem to be particularly generous at the offertory, or, at any rate, were not years back. He says that when he first knew the Dublin churches, the people sat down after the Nicene Creed, and whilst a voluntary was being played a collection was made, and the general rule was for everyone, rich and poor alike, to give a penny. The alms were generally gathered in battered silver plates, taken up to the altar rails, and piled up six or seven high on the holy table.

Until about the year 1855, the clergy at Ings, Kendal, were wise in their generation, and had the collection before the sermon, so as to catch the whole of the congregation, because as soon as the sermon was over those who were not intending to communicate left the church. The gathering was made while the clergyman was in the vestry changing his surplice for the black gown.

The Rev. J. Roach, writing from Clifton, says that in 1861 to 1865 (presumably whilst he was at college) the alms at Holy Communion at St. John's College, Cambridge, were not *collected*, but a large silver alms dish was placed on the rails, and each man went up and made his offering, and knelt for a short prayer.

I believe that the custom now to be mentioned was not at all uncommon in country places in days gone by. Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite, F.S.A., tells me that he remembers at Helpringham in Lincolnshire, within the last fifteen years, seeing the communicants all enter the chancel at the offertory, and drop their contributions to the collection into the plate held by a churchwarden at the screen door as they went in.

As to the counting the offertory money, a friend has sent me an extract from Bishop Lloyd's (additional) statutes for Lichfield Cathedral, 1693.

“*Cap. 8 De Oblatis*, etc. The consecrating priest, or if

the bishop be the consecrator, he who ministers the chalice, shall, before his departure from the Lord's Table, count the money given at the offertory and commit it to the care and keeping of the sacristan or sub-sacristan," etc. etc.

At the Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition held during the Rhyl Church Congress in 1891, a Sanctus Bell was exhibited by the Rev. B. M. Jones, Rector of Llanfair-Dyffrin, Clwyd, Ruthin. It is dated 1723. There is a tradition that, up to the beginning of the present century, this bell was removed from the parish chest and placed on the altar step by the churchwardens and taken back after the service. It was not rung.

Let us pass a step onwards in the service. In all well-ordered churches it is now the custom for the choir to sing, "O Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world," etc., before the consecration prayer, and "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," etc., after it. Although this was ordered by the rubric in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI., the use now of these words is by most regarded as quite a modern introduction of a practice which had entirely died out. This is not the case. The Rev. W. F. Clements, writing from Birmingham in 1873, stated that, when staying in Wiltshire, an old man, over eighty years of age, told him that, when he was a boy, the congregation at the church which he frequented always used to repeat these words. There must be many similar instances, but this is the only one which I am able to cite.

And then as to the Mixed Chalice. The late Canon Humble stated that, in some of the old congregations in Scotland, the celebrant, in making the mixture, which was done publicly in all churches of the older type, used to say, and still in some places continues to say:—"And one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and thence came there out blood and water."

Taking into account the attitude which the Wesleyan Methodists assume in relation to the church, a former curate of Caunton, Nottinghamshire, has stated that the Methodists in that village, a very small and pious body, retain the old custom of not having their meetings at such times as clash with the church services, "and some of them are our most regular communicants. There is one old man of eighty-four who regularly communicates on Sunday at 8.30, goes to the meeting-house, which is close by, at 9.30, and after that creeps off home. He used to come to mattins and preaching at 11, but now he cannot manage it."

More striking still is a statement which appears in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of October, 1736, in an account given of one, Thomas Wright, citizen of London, who died, aged sixty-one:—"Though an Independent, and a member of Mr. Howe's congregation, he was a strict monthly communicant of the Church of England."

Perhaps some of my readers will be surprised to learn that the "Houselling Cloth," as an "ornament" of the church, is still "retained and in use" in not a few places. Let us take Wimborne Minster, Dorsetshire, first. It is the custom there for the communicants to kneel at long, low tables covered with white linen which stand along the top step of the chancel. Tradition says that, before the tables were put there, a long strip of linen was held before the communicants by two deacons, but the tables have been there for the last two hundred years; they are never moved, and are always covered with white linen.

I may notice in passing that in the churchwarden's accounts of St. Margaret's, Westminster, in 1599, the following appears:—

"Item. Paid for a long diaper cloth to make two towels for the communicants, 12s. 8d."

Some years ago the Vicar of Holyrood, Southampton, wrote to say that the Houselling Cloth was still used there at the celebration of the Holy Communion. He found it in use when he went there, and retained it as a relic of old times. There is no doubt, he thinks, that the custom is a very old one, as his two predecessors covered pretty nearly a century between them. His immediate predecessor (Dr. Wilson) was not one at all disposed to introduce new fashions, and his vicariate began in 1824.

In the *Ecclesiologist* of February, 1859, is a letter from a clergyman, in which he says:—"I was called upon to-day in an official capacity to administer Communion to a considerable number of old alms-folk in a church in the very heart of the city of London. . . . One poor old woman from Bristol who communicated, when she knelt at the altar step, deliberately spread her white, or rather yellow-white, pocket handkerchief along the rail before communicating."

This fact lends some colour to the suggestion made by Mr. Cousins in his "Exeter Fifty Years Since," the second edition of which appeared in 1878, that the clean white pocket handkerchief which old-fashioned people used to carry round their prayer books was a survival of the old Housel Cloth.

At the Parish Church of St. Germans, Cornwall, the rails are covered with white hangings on Communion Sundays, and this has been done time out of mind. The popular idea there is that it is to prevent the dresses of the squire's ladies from being soiled!¹

A few other places where the Housel Cloth is, or till lately has been in use, may be mentioned. The list is in no sense intended to be even approximately exhaustive, but merely embraces examples which I have gathered from

¹ *Notes and Queries* (1858), p. 444.

well accredited published sources, or which have been supplied to me by private correspondents.

At the Parish Church at Leamington clean white napkins are placed along the altar rails every Sunday in the year. Whenever there is to be a celebration the altar rails at Swayford Church, Lincolnshire, are covered with a long linen cloth, as also at St. Mary's Thame, Oxfordshire, up to 1841. This is still observed at St. Mary's (the University Church), Oxford.¹ A like custom was observed up to 1861 or 1862 at Westhide, a chapelry of Stoke Edith, Hereford. At St. Peter's, Hereford, this was the case up to 1874, and may still be continued. At Holmer, and at Mordiford, in the same country, persons still living can remember the custom. It had been followed from time immemorial in the Parish Church at Henslow, Huish, Langport, until the building was "restored" in 1872, when for some cause or another the usage was given up; but at St. Bride's Major, a parish in Glamorgan, the practice of placing white linen hangings on the altar rails on Communion Sundays is still observed.

It is generally taken for granted that the Housel Cloth, where used, was always of white linen, but this, it would seem, was not the case. A Stockton clergyman told me some ten years ago, that five years previously he was at Bolam in Northumberland and he saw the vicar's housemaid preparing the altar for the monthly celebration. Part of her work consisted in tying on to the stone altar rails a cloth of the same colour as the altar cloth (blue), so as to hang down on both sides. The late vicar had only recently died. He was an "Evangelical," and had held the benefice since 1817.

From a communication by the Rev. H. T. Ellacombe to

¹ *Notes and Queries*, October 17, December 26, 1874.

Notes and Queries,¹ we learn that "from time immemorial the *Gloria in Excelsis* has been sung in Exeter Cathedral every Sunday, and on Christmas Day and Ascension Day. The ten chorister boys are arranged outside the outermost altar rail, for there are two, one near the table, the other at some distance, and within these the communicants are assembled, and the sacred elements are administered to each by the officiating priests going to them. After the service, the boys close the procession of clergymen, each party filing off to their own respective vestries. But when the bishop is present, the boys precede and arrange themselves in a line on their knees in one of the side aisles where the bishop passes on his way out of the cathedral, and each receives his blessing."

One more curious usage in connection with the Holy Communion must be mentioned, *viz.* that of giving metal tokens to the communicants. I learned from the late Canon Humble that in Scotland the old way of securing the Church from unfit communicants was by means of a token which used to be given by the pastor during the week to the intending communicant. These were collected by the clerk as the communicants approached the altar. This still continues in a few congregations. The custom was derived from Presbyterian sources, for it still is in use among them, though people are beginning to think it vulgar, and it is gradually dying out. Few people, however, are aware that instances of a similar custom in the Church of England are on record. Thus, Communion tokens were given at St. Saviour's, Southwark, in 1627, and at Henley on Thames in 1639.²

¹ *Notes and Queries* (1856) p. 143.

² *Ibid.*, ses. 2, 6 ; 432.

CHAPTER IV.

BAPTISMAL CUSTOMS.

So far as my researches have gone, I have come across fewer out-of-the-way customs connected with the sacrament of Holy Baptism than might have been expected; but such as I have found shall be recorded.

To begin with Ireland. In the wild parish of Ballintoy, County Antrim, I understand that there used to be almost a struggle, on the occasion of a baptism, to obtain the first water, the child who was first baptised being considered likely to be most lucky afterwards. It was also usual to sew up in the infant's clothes a large oat-cake. This, on the return home, formed, with whisky, the christening feast.

In Burt's "Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to his Friend in London," published in 1754, the following barbarous custom is related, which, though not exactly belonging to Church Folklore, may be worth mentioning. "The moment a child is born it is plunged into cold water, though it should be necessary first to break the ice. At the christening, the father holds it up before the pulpit, and receives a long extemporary admonition concerning its education."¹ This is carrying out the principle of the survival of the fittest to rather an extreme length. Scotchmen have always had the character of being physically tough, and no wonder, if they live through this discipline.

The idea formerly prevailed amongst Lincolnshire folk

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1754), p. 370.

that if a child be born with its hands open it was an indication of liberality and benevolence, but if its hands be closed, the child when it grows up will assuredly prove a churl. When an infant is first taken to a neighbour's house it is presented with eggs, the emblem of abundance, and with salt, the symbol of friendship. As to the christening, it is the belief of some very simple people, that unless the child cries during the office it will not live. This silly credulousness occasions some poor infants to suffer considerable torture, for their barbarous nurses do not hesitate to pinch their tender flesh, or to prick them with pins to excite the wished-for evidence of their longevity.¹

A lady at Rugeley, writing in 1874, says that, "At Lyme Regis in Dorsetshire the church is built on a hill, consequently there are steps all up the aisle. The baptising is at the lower end of the church. Immediately after naming the children the clergyman takes the child last christened, and the godmothers and nurses follow with the other children up the steps, where he receives them into the church.

Trine affusion is more common at the present day than it was in the earlier part of the century. It is interesting to know that there were at least some clergymen a hundred years ago who knew how to baptise properly. The Rev. E. Symonds states that his father, when baptising a child, and pouring water upon it only once, was told by an old Devonshire clergyman ordained in the last century, who was present, that when he was ordained it was always the custom to pour the water over the child's face three times.

A very odd custom has been related to me by the authoress of "The Heir of Redcliffe." "I have seen," she says, "a cottager's tenth child christened with a sprig of myrtle in its cap to mark it as a tithe child; and I have heard of the Rector of Compton recognising such a tithe

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1832), part ii., p. 493.

child, and sending him to school. I think the custom is dropped."

Strange names are sometimes given to infants, but it would, I think, be difficult to find one more strange than that about to be mentioned.

It appears that in the parish of Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, there is a farm called "Almsbury." In 1747 a child was left by some vagrants in one of the fields of the farm. Some pigs attacked the babe, but the little one was defended by a dog, which drove the pigs away, and the child was, for the time being, saved. In the Parish Register of Winchcombe the following entries are found:—

"Sept. 8, 1747. Susanna Smith Buried, and Cunozoa Almsbury Baptized. This child was exposed and preserved by dogs which defended it from the swine.

"Oct. 10. Cunozoa Almsbury Burd."

Those who wish to see what very odd names have sometimes been given to children must turn to the end of this volume. In Appendix II. they will find a collection such as, I believe, has never before been published.

In many parts of Surrey, when several children are brought to be baptised at the same time, it is the custom of the clerk to take care that the males be presented first, for it is thought that if the girls were to take precedence the boys would grow up beardless.¹ This idea formerly prevailed in the north of England, and the custom of giving the boy babies precedence continued at Newcastle-on-Tyne down to 1863 at the least.² At Harrietsham in Kent, however, though the same custom is followed, the reason given for it is slightly different. The people there say that

¹ *Notes and Queries*, Oct. 21, 1854.

² *Ibid.*, May 31, 1877.

if the girls were to be baptised before the boys they would have hair on their faces when they grew up.

Another odd custom prevailed in the North. When a child was taken to church to be christened, a little boy was engaged to meet the infant on its leaving the house, because it was deemed an unlucky omen to encounter a female first. For this service the boy received a small present of a cake and cheese wrapped in paper.¹

Mr. Henderson gives us a description of a somewhat similar usage, stating that at Durham it is the custom (1879) at a baptism for the nurse to take a piece of cake and cheese to church, which is given to the first person of the opposite sex to the child met on leaving the church. A like custom exists in Somersetshire, and in Cornwall, and did lately about Dartmoor.²

As bearing this out by personal experience, we have Mr. J. W. Thomas, Dewsbury, stating, in 1853, that when riding some years since in the eastern part of Cornwall he met a christening party, also on horseback, headed by a nurse with a baby in her arms. Making a halt as he approached her, she stopped him, and producing a cake, insisted upon his taking it. Several years afterwards, in the Isle of Man, an old person told him that it had been customary, within the speaker's recollection, for a woman when carrying a child to be christened to take with her a piece of bread and cheese to give to the first person she met, for the purpose of saving the child from witchcraft, or the fairies.³

In Northumberland, Mr. Henderson tells us, it is the custom to make the christened child sleep the first night in the cap he wore at baptism. At the beginning of the present century the earliest possible baptism was regarded as essential to the health of the infant.

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1822), part ii., p. 13.

² "Folklore of the Northern Counties," p. 12.

³ *Notes and Queries*, December 24, 1853.

Formerly a cloth was kept in families for use at christenings, and called in Dorsetshire a "Christening Palm." One about five feet long and a little less broad of crimson satin edged with silver lace is mentioned in *Notes and Queries*. The same thing is called in Devonshire a "Christening Pane."¹

A gentleman, writing from Beaminster, gives the following list of christening ornaments provided about the end of the seventeenth century, and now in his possession.

1. A lined white figured satin cap.
2. A lined white satin cap embroidered with sprays of gold coloured silk.
3. A white satin palm embroidered to match. Size 44 inches by 34 inches.
4. A pair of dress cuffs, white satin, similarly embroidered, trimmed with lace, evidently intended to be worn by the bearer of the infant.
5. A pair of linen gloves or mittens for the baby, trimmed with narrow lace, the back of the fingers lined with coloured figured silk.
6. A palm, 54 inches by 48 inches, of rich stiff yellow silk lined with white satin.

The writer of the above adds that the palm or pall was not in use only for the baptism of an infant; but certainly as late as forty years ago, the wrapper (often of fine muslin and lace) in which the child was brought down to see company was so called.²

Mr. Henderson says that "much importance attaches to a baby's first visit to another house, on which occasion it should receive three things: an egg, salt, and white bread or cake. The egg, a sacred emblem from the remotest

¹ *Notes and Queries*, April 10, 1875.

² *Ibid.*, August 14, 1875.

antiquity, and the cake and salt things used alike in Pagan and Jewish sacrifices (Lev. ii. 13). Somewhat grotesquely they add in the East Riding of Yorkshire a fourth thing—a few matches to light the child on its way to heaven. These votive offerings must be pinned in the baby's clothes, and so brought home. I have heard of an old woman in Durham speak of this as the child receiving alms. "He could not claim them before he was baptised," she said, "but now he is a Christian, and has a right to ask alms of his fellow Christians." Near Leeds this ceremony is called "puddening."¹

At Wakefield this custom is called "blessing," and a piece of silver is always added to the other gifts. The usage prevails in Lancashire, Durham, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire.

On November 5th, 1848, there was a meeting of the Archæological Institute, at which Mr. F. A. Carrington, Recorder of Woodstock, read notices of certain customs prevalent in Monmouthshire and South Wales. He said that when a mother died shortly after child-birth the infant had been baptised on her coffin at the funeral. This is said to have been done at Monmouth in 1814. The custom was unknown there when Mr. Carrington read his paper, but was occasionally used in certain parts of the Principality, the baptismal water being sometimes placed on the coffin instead of in the font, and the baptism performed in the church porch, or even in the house of the parents before the removal of the corpse.²

Here is a personal experience by one formerly well known in London—the late Dr. A. B. Evans, Rector of St. Mary-le-Strand. He stated that, when officiating at a church in Herefordshire, he was sent for to baptise the child of a woman who had died shortly after its birth. On

¹ "Folklore of the Northern Counties," p. 20

² *Archæological Journal*, vol. xvi., p. 88.

preparing to perform the office, he was told that the custom was to baptise the child, under such circumstances, over the dead body of the mother. Not wishing to contravene their custom, he was conducted to the room where the coffined body lay, and baptised the child, holding it over the remains of the mother.

To speak now about Baptism by Immersion, concerning which I have a few memoranda.

One of the queerest arguments in favour of it that I know is in a letter from Sir John Floyer to Mr. King of Bungay, cited in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of April, 1734, recommending cold bathing. Hence he advocates the dipping of children in baptism, which, he says, has been practised at Lichfield and elsewhere with good effect.

Why the water in the font should of necessity be cold does not appear. No one with any sense would dip a baby in cold water, one would think, unless it were a Scotch baby, and just newly born!¹

When the Church of St. John's, Torquay, was built, under the supervision of Mr. G. E. Street, R.A., and a sunk pit made at the west end of the nave for adult baptisms by immersion, many people thought that such an arrangement had never been seen before. They were wrong. The Rev. F. A. Carr, when Vicar of Cranbrook, Kent, wrote as follows:—"We have a curious font for the baptism of adults by immersion, which I believe to be unique. It is a small well, seven feet deep, built against the south wall by a celebrated Vicar of Cranbrook, in the early part of the last century, *viz.* by John Johnson, the author of the "Unbloody Sacrifice," the "Vade Mecum," etc.

There was, and may be still, in the Church of St. Laurence, Reading, a baptistry under some of the pews. Some years ago, a family of Quakers, desiring to be ad-

¹ See p. 74.

mitted into the Church by baptism by immersion, the pews were removed, the baptistry filled with water, and the converts immersed.¹

In the Church of Trevethin, Monmouthshire, there is a baptistry for purposes of immersion; as also in the comparatively new Church of St. Mary, Aberdare.

Some ten or more years ago, the late Canon Cadman of Holy Trinity, Marylebone, well known in his day as a very pious Low Churchman, very kindly sent me, in consequence of my request, the following description of an adult baptism which he celebrated in that church, but, unfortunately, he did not mention in what year it took place:—

“The parents of a young woman had delayed her baptism, and when I became acquainted with them, I found that they entertained, in common with their daughter, strong opinions in favour of immersion. I did all I could to show them that the *mode* was not so important as they thought, but at length pointed out to them that the Church did not object, in certain cases, to baptism by immersion. After obtaining the bishop’s consent, I procured a large bath or tank (or, rather, had one constructed for the purpose) with steps outside and inside. Placing it by the font, I had it filled with water, and at a certain portion of the service, the young person, with her parents and witnesses, came forward.

“When the time for immersion came, I commended her to the silent prayers of the congregation, while she retired to the vestry to undress, and to put on a suitable flannel robe. Coming forth with her mother, I took her right hand, led her up the outside steps of the bath, directed her to descend into the water, and standing by the outside of the bath, and placing one arm under her head, I baptised her by immersion, in the sacred name of the Trinity. She

¹ *Notes and Queries*, October 27, 1886.

then retired again to the vestry. There was again prayerful silence, and when she came again into the congregation in her usual dress, the service was concluded.

“A very solemn feeling prevailed. Prejudices were excited in some quarters, but removed by explanations, and I think that much good resulted—certainly adherence to our Church instead of alienations from it. In the course of twenty years we have had three such cases.”

All this was very nice, of course, but I cannot see why Mr. Cadman should have made such a fuss about it. Considering the rubric in the office for the baptism of infants, which makes “affusion” the *permissible* form of baptism in case the child is too weakly to be dipped, the idea of asking the bishop to sanction the immersion of a grown-up person, who herself desired it, is beyond my comprehension. But I have been brought up with old-fashioned ideas, and prefer the traditions of the Church, and the ordering of the rubrics, to the *ipse dixit* of individual bishops, who, of course, have no right to override either of these very plain guides in order to have their own private tastes and fancies carried out.

“Within the last three months,” writes J. W. Batchelor from Odiham, Hants, “I have known two clergymen baptising in rivers in Wales, the question being left to the choice of the candidate.”¹

In the time of the Commonwealth public baptism fell into almost total disuse, and private baptism became the rule. Good men who were in authority mourned over this, but it was very long ere they could get the rule of the church obeyed. Bishop Bull, who presided over the diocese of St. David's from 1705 to 1710, in a charge to his clergy, has the following :—“The Church strictly requires that it

¹ *Notes and Queries*, Nov. 17, 1866.

(baptism) be performed publicly in the House of God, not in private houses, except in case of real necessity, as when a child is weak, and cannot, without endangering itself, be brought to church. But notwithstanding this strict order of our Church, in most places in this country, baptism is altogether administered in private houses, and scarce any, if any, baptised in church. If this may be allowed, away with the fonts in your churches. What do they signify? To what purpose are they there? If all the authority I am invested with can do it, I will see this lamentable abuse of the sacrament of baptism reformed."

The probability is that, apart from the natural tendency of people to carelessness and irreverence, a Puritanical dislike to the sign of the cross and to sponsors was to a great extent the cause of the disuse of public baptism, for according to the office in the Prayer Book, a child could be baptised privately without either the one or the other. It is most likely that the scandal of charging fees for baptism grew out of the habit of having children privately baptised, in which case a gift of money to the clergyman for the trouble of attending at a private house at a certain hour might not seem unreasonable. Whether this demand still exists in any parish, I know not; but, as we are aware, it was discontinued only a few years ago at St. George's, Hanover Square, in consequence of the agitation of some earnest churchmen.

It may be well to note that the Act 35 and 36 Vict., c. 36, renders it unlawful to demand any fee or reward for the celebration of the sacrament of baptism, or for the registry thereof. Some clergymen, especially those in remote parishes, may not be aware of this.

It is not generally known that, in 1783, it was enacted that there should be a stamp duty of threepence on every baptism registered. This is, I believe, recorded in the Register of St. John's, Clerkenwell. The Act imposing it

was repealed in 1794. See more about this in the section on Marriage Customs.

In the last century it was customary with people of fashion to have negroes as men servants and pages. It is evident that even in the eighteenth century, when the Church of England is supposed to have been at her lowest ebb, some pains were taken by masters and mistresses in seeing after the spiritual welfare of their dependents. An extract from the Baptismal Register of St. John's, Westminster, will serve to illustrate this :—

- “ 1730. April 2.—John Chaffinch, a blackamoor, 16 years of age; baptised by Mr. Moore. No money.
 1731. Oct. 11.—Sanders Dover, a blackamoor boy, aged 13.
 1733. Jan. 10.—John Brown, a blackamoor.
 1760. Sept. 5.—John James, an adult black.
 1772. Feb. 5.—Andrew Clarke, a mulatto of riper years.
 1773. Sept. 1.—John Johnson, an adult blackamoore;
 Sarah Johnson, an adult blackamoor.
 1786. Feb. 10.—James Murray Claris, an adult blackamoor.”

A somewhat curious idea prevails in the East Riding of Yorkshire, *viz.* that if a woman who is about to become a mother were to act as godmother at a baptism, the child for which she stood would soon die.

Hitherto in this volume the order in which the several offices come in the Prayer Book has determined the order of the subjects dealt with. It seems, however, convenient here to depart from our rule, and to treat of one or two customs in regard to the rite of

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after having spoken of those which are connected with baptism. But before this is done it may be well to in-

quire what were the sentiments of the better class of the clergy about this rite two hundred years ago, when it was by no means unusual for the churching service to be said in private houses.

Dean Comber in his "Companion to the Temple," published in 1674, says,¹ "With us in England custom only seems to determine the time to be a full month, and our rubric prudently says no more, but that it shall be done at the usual time. And that we may give no countenance to the Jewish opinion of their uncleanness, we admit them to the Church before any prayers be said for them. And in most places they come up to the steps of the altar, that being the proper place to offer the sacrifice of praise, and to remind them of their duty in receiving the Sacrament either then, or at the first opportunity. The woman only goes to the altar, but everyone present has a fresh occasion to exercise his most serious meditations. . . . To do this (*i.e.* to church women) in a private house is as contrary to the end as it is to the name of this office. If the women will not do their duty the priest must do his, *i.e.* refuse to go to their private houses, which hath been decreed in a late council, *viz.* that the priest do not go to the woman's house to make the accustomed prayer there; no, not though she be so weak as not to be able to come to church. And the reason hereof is evident, because she may stay till she is stronger. She is not obliged to come at a certain time, but only so soon as she is able.

"The last rubric intimates two things. First, she must offer the usual oblations to the priest, *viz.* the chrysom or alb thrown over the child at christening, and some small offering to him that ministers, which are not requitals, but only acknowledgments of her gratitude to the Church. Besides which those women who are able ought to give some considerable sum of money to the poor upon every

¹ Introduction, part iv.

such deliverance as a testimony of their real sense of God's mercy shown to them. Secondly, that she either do now, or as soon as can be, receive the Holy Sacrament, which these women always did in the Greek and Æthiopic Churches, and, it seems, in this very Church above a thousand years ago. And still we carry them up to the altar to mind them of their duty ; and doubtless the omission of it occasions the too soon forgetting of His mercy, and the sudden falling off from piety which we see in too many."¹

The words in the rubric requiring the woman to come "decently apparelled" require explanation. In the seventeenth century it was not thought becoming that on such an occasion a woman should wear her ordinary head-dress, and instances might be quoted of clergymen refusing to "church" women who came without the customary "vaile." It is evident that in some parishes this was provided by the church, for in an inventory of church goods belonging to St. Benet's, Gracechurch Street, in 1560, there is "A Churching Cloth, fringed, White Damask."

We must inquire what is meant by the "convenient place," which, according to the rubric, the woman is to occupy. The principle, of course, is that the place shall in some way symbolise the fact that the woman is now in a position to resume those Church privileges from which for a time she has been debarred. In pre-Reformation times she was to be at the church door—a most improper place, one would think, for a woman who was out for the first time after her confinement. In the first book of Edward VI. her position was to be "nigh unto the quire door." In the second book of Edward VI. she was to be "nigh unto the place where the Table standeth." But during the past three hundred years the custom has varied. Mr. J. H. Blunt quotes Bishop Wren's orders for the Diocese of Norwich, in 1636. "That women to be churched come and kneel at a

¹ Part iv., sec. 6.

side near the Communion Table, without the rail, being veiled according to the custom, and not covered with a hat; or otherwise not to be churched, but presented at the next generals by the minister, or churchwardens, or any of them." In Bishop Brian Duppa's Visitation Articles in the Chichester Diocese, in 1638, there is an inquiry similar in substance to the above. "Doth he (the priest) go into the chancel, the woman also repairing thither, kneeling as near the Communion Table as may be; and if there be a Communion, doth she communicate in acknowledgment of the great blessing received by her safe delivery? Doth the woman who is to be churched use the accustomed habit in such cases with a white veil or kerchief upon her head?"¹

In some churches, more especially I believe in Lincolnshire, there was a pew or open seat, which was known as the "churching seat."

The feeling that women ought not to leave their own house or garden before they have been to church is very widely spread. The Rev. W. T. Frere says, that this was strictly observed when he was at Rugeley. In Herefordshire it was not considered "correct" for the husband to appear in church on the day of his wife's churching, at all events in the same pew with her. An antiquary of the county considered this a relic of Roman Paganism, connected with the worship of the *Bona Dea*.²

In Devonshire, I am told, some people call being churched being "uprose." I shall never forget (says my informant) the bewilderment of a strange clergyman, who had taken a baptism in a parish church in that county, when the clerk followed him into the vestry with the mysterious announcement, "Her wants to be uprose."

"At Legbourne," writes the Rev. J. H. Overton, "and I

¹ "Annotated Prayer Book," p. 305.

² *Notes and Queries*, March 27, 1852.

think at other Lincolnshire villages, women look upon their churching with an almost superstitious regard. I had a curious instance when I first came here, in 1860. I at once tried to knock on the head the custom of having baptisms after the service, and on one occasion when I told a woman who came to be churched and to have her child baptised, that the baptism would take place after the second lesson, she replied, 'That is impossible, for I cannot walk down the church until I have been churched.' The churching service used to be read just before the general thanksgiving, so I overcame the scruple by having the churching service before the general service began."

The idea of registering churchings would scarcely ever occur to a clergyman now, but as a matter of fact such entries do exist. In the Parish Church Register at Preston, Lancashire, in the early part of the seventeenth century, there is a record of the churching of women.¹ Similar entries are found in the last page of a volume of Sidmouth Parish Registers, and also at Staplehurst.²

Much more stress was laid by the bishops in the last century upon the importance of

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than is generally supposed. In charge after charge we find this duty pressed upon the clergy. There is, however, reason to believe that in many parishes it was only practised during Lent. The Rev. G. W. Cole, when at Ely, in 1873, stated that an old woman named Mary Lowery, whom he buried the previous year, aged 91, remembered being catechised in church when a child.

A lady at Torquay has told me that about 1830, at

¹ *Notes and Queries*, October 21, 1865.

² *Ibid.*, November 18, 1865.

Morchard Bishop, the children from different districts in the parish assembled in church occasionally during the summer months to say their catechism. They were summoned by a notice given out by the clerk from the singing gallery. The Rev. Edgar Hoskins remembers that on every Sunday afternoon in Lent the collegers at Eton were catechised during even-song in the college chapel. This was from 1844 to 1849.

CHAPTER V.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

It can be readily believed that a great variety of local customs have clustered round such an interesting event as marriage. Some of these I propose to describe in the present chapter.

Most persons know that in pre-Reformation days there were certain restrictions as to the seasons when, according to church order, marriages ought not to be solemnised, but comparatively few are aware that the same rule was maintained after English churchmen had shaken themselves free from the imposed trammels of the Papacy. I need not go back to the canons issued in the early ages of Christianity on this subject. It will suffice to say that, according to the Sarum Missal, which as an old Church of England authority should be regarded as our legitimate guide in such a matter, the following are mentioned as the prohibited seasons. From Advent Sunday until the octave of the Epiphany; from Septuagesima until the octave of Easter; and from Rogation Sunday until six days after Pentecost. The late Mr. J. H. Blunt, in his "Annotated Prayer Book," tells us that a Latin notice of this kind appears in the register book of Dymchurch in Kent, and a rhyming English one to the same effect in the church of St. Mary's, Beverley, dated November 25th, 1641. In the church at Wimbish in Essex a note appears as regards the season during which marriage is prohibited by the Church, and a similar entry is in the register book of Hornby in Yorkshire. In his charge of 1750, Archbishop Sharp

mentions these prohibited times ; and they are set down as matters of general information in some of the almanacs of the last century. Bishops and archdeacons in the seventeenth century were in the habit of inquiring at their visitations whether any have married in the times wherein marriage is by law restrained without lawful licence. Reference may be made to Bishop Andrewes' Articles, Winchester, 1619 and 1625 ; to Bishop Cosin's in the East Riding, 1627 ; and to Bishop Montague's at Norwich, 1638.¹

On the fly-leaf of the register at Everton, Notts, the following doggerel appears :—

“ Advent marriage doth deny,
But Hilary gives thee liberty ;
Septuagesima says thee nay ;
Eight days from Easter says you may ;
Rogation bids thee to contain,
But Trinity sets thee free again.”

In East Anglia there exists an old saying :—

“ Marry in Lent,
And you'll live to repent.”

It was also regarded as unlucky for a woman to marry a man whose surname began with the same letter as her own. Hence we have :—

“ To change the name and not the letter,
Is a change for the worse, and not for the better.”

The publication of banns before marriage is a very ancient custom, and dates back to the Lateran Council in 1139. Three publications are required by the canons of Westminster in 1200, and on three Sundays or festivals,

¹ *Notes and Queries* (1857), p. 97.

distinct from each other, by Reynold's Constitutions in 1322. The term "banns" is derived from a word signifying to proclaim, whence comes also the word "banner," which emblem signifies the publication of the purpose of the procession in which it is exhibited. It is perhaps worth while, in passing, to draw attention to the strictness of English Church Law in respect to this matter. It is laid down in canon 62, that no minister, upon pain of suspension, *per triennium ipso facto*, shall celebrate matrimony between any persons without a faculty or licence granted by some of the persons in these our constitutions expressed, except the banns of matrimony have been first published three several Sundays or holy days, in the time of divine service, in the parish churches or chapels where the said parties dwell, according to the Book of Common Prayer.

Of course the publication of banns in church was intended to prevent clandestine marriages. But Thomas Comber, D.D., in his "Companion to the Temple," published in 1688, says this:—"The time of publication engages the whole congregation to pray for a blessing upon the parties to be joined, it being the custom in these parts of England, upon this publication, for all the people to say, 'God speed them well.'" The words, "these parts of England," evidently signify Yorkshire, as Comber was appointed precentor of York in 1683, and did not become Dean of Durham till 1691.

The congratulatory exclamation referred to by Dean Comber was formerly by no means uncommon; but it was used in various ways. Thus, at Cromhall in Gloucestershire the words were said only after the publication of the banns for the last time. The custom prevailed until quite recently in some parts of Lincolnshire,¹ and at Laceby in that county the bells ring out at the end of the service after the third "asking." The "God speed 'em well" was

¹ *Notes and Queries*, December 27, 1879.

in use at Thornton Steward in the North Riding of Yorkshire up to 1871, and at Patrick Brompton in the same Riding up to 1866.¹ Judging from a letter from Horace Walpole to Mr. Conway, May 22nd, 1753, the publication of banns was considered by fashionable people as degrading. It was, I fancy, with reference to a Fleet marriage that Walpole wrote as follows:—"It is well that you are married. How would my Lady Aylesbury have liked to be asked in a parish church for three Sundays running? I really believe she would have worn her weeds for ever, rather than have passed through so impudent a ceremony."

I may mention here that well within my own memory those who ranked as gentlefolks were almost always married by licence, and it was regarded as *infra dig.* to be "asked" publicly in church. It is now, as we know, common for gentle and simple alike to have their "banns put up," and this change is one very greatly for the better.

But to return to the congratulatory exclamation mentioned above. As an example of how good old usages will die out, and thus to a certain extent justify the publication of this volume, I may state that at Tealby in Lincolnshire, some fifty years ago, the clerk always used to say "God speed them well" after the publication of the banns. This man died, and his successor discontinued the use of the words, although the squire of the parish begged that the custom should be retained. It has never been resumed.

A slightly different usage from this I may mention. The Rev. T. Robinson of Ewshot, Hants, tells me that when he was at Eyam in Derbyshire, some thirty or more years ago, the oldest man in the congregation, and not the clerk, was accustomed to pronounce this formula.

Another clergyman writes to say that the words of joy-wishing were sometimes used in the course of the marriage service. When he was appointed to the curacy of the

¹ *Notes and Queries*, September 25, 1880.

Parish Church of Windermere, in 1863, and was about to take a wedding for the first time, the clerk, who was a well-known character in the lake district, begged him to make a pause when he got to the words, "Or else for ever hereafter hold his peace," "because," said he, "I have something to say." The clergyman made the desired pause, and the clerk at once added, "God speed them well." The rationale of this is evident. The priest is directed to challenge those present to come forward and forbid the marriage, and the clerk, as representing the congregation officially, says in effect that not only do the people urge no impediment, but rather wish the couple "God speed."

The clerk used to call this "blessing the couple," and regarded it as an immemorial custom. At the clerk's death it was discontinued.

At Hope, near Sheffield, a somewhat different usage prevailed, and is, perhaps, still continued. The words expressive of good-will, pronounced by the clerk in a high key, followed immediately upon the act of the clergyman in joining the hands of the bride and bridegroom, saying, "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

There was a curious custom at Norham, in the diocese of Durham, which possibly still exists. If the banns are twice published and the marriage does not take place, the refusing party, whether the man or the woman, pays forty shillings to the vicar for "scorning the Church."

The Rev. J. H. Overton tells me that at Legbourne Church in Lincolnshire it is the custom to ring a peal of bells immediately after the service, when a couple have been "asked" in church for the last time.

We must now consider the customs which are more immediately connected with the marriage ceremony.

And first, I must speak of a very curious fashion which, I believe, is still prevalent in Wales, *viz.* the practice of

“making a bidding,” or of sending bidding letters, of which a specimen will be given lower down. This is so general in most parts of the Principality that printers usually keep the form in type, and make alterations in it as occasion requires. The custom in towns is confined to servants and mechanics, but in the country, farmers of the humbler sort make biddings. Of late years tea-parties have, in Carmarthen, been substituted for biddings, but persons attending pay for what they get, and so incur no obligation. But recipients at a “bidding” are expected to return, and generally do return, all gifts of the above nature whenever called for upon a similar occasion. When a bidding is made it is usual for a large procession to accompany the young couple to church, and thence to the house where the bidding is held. Accompanying is considered an addition to the obligation conferred by the gift. “I have seen,” says the writer from whom I have culled the above information, “I daresay, six hundred people in a wedding procession. The men walk together, and the women together to church, and in returning they walk in pairs, or often in trios, one man between two women. In the country they ride, and there is generally a desperate race home to the ‘bidding,’ where you would be surprised to see a comely lass, with Welsh hat on her head and ordinary dress, often take the lead of fifty or a hundred smart fellows, over rough roads that would shake your Astley riders out of their seats and propriety.”¹

The form of “bidding letter” referred to by the writer above quoted ran thus:—

“CARMARTHEN, *October 2nd, 1850.*

“As we intend to enter the matrimonial state on Tuesday, the 22nd of October instant, we are encouraged by our friends to make a bidding, on the occasion, the same day, at

¹ *Notes and Queries*, February 15, 1851.

the new market-house, near the market-place, when and where the favour of your good and agreeable company is respectfully solicited, and whatever donation you may be pleased to confer upon us then will be thankfully received, and warmly acknowledged, and cheerfully repaid whenever called for on a similar occasion, by your most obedient servants,

“HARRY JONES, *Shoemaker*.

“ELIZA DAVIES.

“The young man, his father (John Jones, shoemaker), and his sister (Mary Jones), his grandmother (Nurse Jones), his uncle and aunt (George Jones, painter, and Mary, his wife), and his aunt (Elizabeth Rees), desire that all gifts due to them be returned to the young man on the above day, and will be thankful for all additional favours.

“The young woman, her father and mother (Evan Davies, pig-drover, and Mary, his wife), and her brother and sisters (John, Hannah, Jane, and Annie Davies), desire that all gifts of the above nature, due to them, be returned to the young woman on the above day, and will be thankful for all additional favours conferred.”¹

¹ The present custom in Paris is to send out bidding letters on the occasion of marriage. I give below, in the section on “Funeral Customs,” specimens of funeral bidding letters also used there. The following are examples of those now sent out by Roman Catholic and Protestant gentle folk respectively—the latter being those relating to a mixed marriage. It need scarcely be said that “temple” is the word used to indicate a Calvinistic place of worship, whilst “Eglise” is confined to Roman Catholic churches.

“Monsieur Charles ———, Avoué honoraire, Chevalier de la légion d’Honneur, a l’honneur de vous faire part du mariage de Mademoiselle Louise ———, sa fille, avec Monsieur Jules ———, Sous-Chef de bureau a la Direction générale des Douanes (Ministère des Finances).

“Et vous prie d’assister a la bénédiction nuptiale qui leur sera

We now come to consider the question as to the proper place in the church where the earlier part of the marriage service should be conducted. Some people have thought that to have it in the nave was a mere modern ritualistic "fad," albeit, plainly ordered by the Prayer Book rubric. It

donnée le Lundi — Février 1890, a midi *tres-précis*, en l'Eglise St. ———.

"7, rue ———."

"Madam ——— a l'honneur de vous faire part du mariage de son fils, Monsieur Jules ———, Sous-Chef de bureau a la Direction générale des Douanes (Minister des Finances), avec Mademoiselle ———.

"Et vous prie d'assister a la bénédiction nuptiale qui leur sera donnée le Lundi — Fevrier 1890, a midi *tres-précis*, en l'Eglise St. ———.

"6, rue ———."

When the invited person is expected at the wedding banquet, a card is enclosed to the following effect:—

"Monsieur Charles ———

recevra

apres la Cérémonie Religieuse.

7, rue ———."

Here are the bidding letters in relation to a mixed marriage:—

"Monsieur Henry ——— a l'honneur de vous faire part de son mariage avec Mademoiselle ———.

"Et vous prie d'assister a la bénédiction nuptiale qui leur sera donnée le Mardi — Avril 1890, au Temple du St. Esprit (rue Roquépine) a 11 heures, et a l'Eglise St. Philippe du Roule a Midi *précis*.

"45, Avenue de ———

"Madam ——— a l'honneur de vous faire part du mariage de Mademoiselle ———, sa fille, avec Monsieur Henry ———.

"Et vous prie d'assister a la bénédiction nuptiale qui leur sera donnée, le Mardi — Avril 1890, au Temple du St. Esprit (rue Roquépine) a 11 heures, et a l'Eglise St. Philippe du Roule, a Midi *précis*.

"7, rue ———."

will interest many to know that the Vicar of Kirkby Lonsdale has told me that, at the reparation of that church, about 1868, he said to the old clerk, born in 1788, that he could now take the earlier part of the marriage service in the body of the church, and the clerk replied:—"That is how it used to be when I was a boy."

In the late Professor Sedgwick's little book about Dent, to which reference has already been made, the following passage occurs:—

"The marriages, whether by license or by banns, were celebrated in the body of the church just under the reading desk till they reached that part of the service where the minister pronounced the parties to be 'man and wife,' etc., and added the blessing. All, then, moved up to the Communion rails, and the clergyman from the north side of the Communion table read the concluding part of the service, and finally the entry was made in the parish register placed on that table."

At Witham in Essex it is, or was, the custom to perform the first part of the marriage service at the font. When the Rev. A. Snell was appointed to the benefice in 1873, he spoke to a bridegroom about this usage, and he (the bridegroom) particularly requested that he might be married at the font, as he liked old customs.

It would be tedious to record the evidence which I have bearing upon this usage, and I will only cite what the Rev. F. Hockin of Phillack, Cornwall, tells me with reference to his parish. He says:—"In the two parishes of which I am rector there is no tradition of the first part of the marriage service having been read elsewhere than at the chancel steps, the parties proceeding to the altar rails at the psalm. My grandfather, my father, and myself having been rectors of this benefice for more than 110 years, I may pretty

confidently affirm that this custom has obtained throughout that time at least."

As an illustration of the way in which old usages die out, I may mention a fact told me by a clergyman, when he was Vicar of St. Mary's, Wolverhampton, who stated that he was informed by his mother that the custom of reading the first part of the marriage service in the body of the church was first broken through at Kelvedon in Essex, by her mother's desire, at the marriage of her elder sister to the Rev. T. Henderson of Messing, by the then Bishop of London (Blomfield), in whose diocese Kelvedon then was. Dr. Blomfield was Bishop of London from 1828 to 1856. This is very far from being a solitary instance amongst high ecclesiastical personages, in which supposed law-makers have been law-breakers.

The pre-Reformation rule was to begin the marriage service at the door of the church. In his "Wyf of Bathe," Chaucer refers to this custom:—

"Housbondes atte chirch dore I have had fyve."

This old usage was abandoned by authority in the time of Edward VI. Yet I have reason to think that it was not entirely given up. There is a poem of Herrick's, written about 1640, which is entitled, "The Entertainment or Porch Verse at the Marriage of Mr. Hen. Northly." Herrick was a Devonshire vicar, and in that county many ancient customs were long retained.

The late Canon Humble, writing in 1874, gave an account of some curious customs which had come under his notice in the north of England.

One is that the bridegroom placed upon the priest's office-book a purse, which is supposed to represent "all his worldly goods," together with the ring, to show that he gives all to his wife as equally at her disposal.

This is really a very ancient custom, dating from the historic times of the Greeks and Romans, and which seems to have prevailed amongst Eastern nations. In the Middle Ages in the north of Europe, the bride, on the morning after the wedding, had the privilege of demanding the "morgengabe" or morning present; to wit, any sum of money, or any estate which she might fix upon, and which the husband could not in honour refuse. Something of the same kind prevailed in England under the name of "Dow purse." "Dow" being, according to the old dictionary writer, "Nic. Bailey," an old word signifying "to give." When Clovis was married to the Princess Clotilde, he offered, by proxy, a *sou* and a *denier*, which became the marriage offering by law in France, and to this day pieces of money are given to the bride varying in value only according to the social rank and opulence of the parties.¹

Canon Humble added that "the clergyman was expected to wish the couple health and happiness, and after the signing of the register, to kiss the bride. The late Dr. Raine has recorded how a peculiarly modest priest, who was a stranger, once marrying a couple in a rural parish, was surprised by the wedding party still tarrying in the vestry; and on asking if anything more was wanted, was told by the bridegroom, 'You haven't kissed Betty,' and he had to do it, though sorely against the grain. Another person had also that privilege, *viz.* the first person who arrived at the house after the marriage. In the border parishes the horses of the attendants were all tethered outside the sacred enclosure, and as soon as the register was signed, all rushed out of the vestry and a race began, each going across country to win the coveted prize. Civilisation has, I suppose, stopped this wild custom."

The canon further states:—"I have myself been stopped on the road, and compelled to drink the health of the

¹ Chambers' "Book of Days," vol. i., p. 719.

bride and bridegroom by a posse of young men riding in advance of the party on their way from church. The 'best man' undertakes this office, and I believe himself supplies the liquor."

This custom extends also to Scotland. A "dry-lipped" wedding is supposed to be certainly unfortunate.

Money, too, is very frequently scattered amongst the people gathered round the church. Nothing less than silver was to be so scattered. "The scramble," said Canon Humble, "was dreadful to see."

In connection with what was said above about the bridegroom placing a purse on the book, as well as the ring, another curious custom was formerly, and still may be, usual in the north of England. A clergyman, describing the first wedding which he took in a northern parish, says that, in the vestry, after the service, the bridegroom put half-a-sovereign into his hand, a sum much in excess of the fee, and asked for the change. "I gave it to him," says my informant, "according to his request, but as I did so I plainly observed a shade of displeasure pass over the open countenance of the bride, which was evidently shared by the whole wedding party. I felt conscious of having unwittingly given offence, nor had I long to wait for an explanation. The old clerk, on his return from accompanying the newly-married couple to the church porch, said at once, 'Oh, sir! you should have put the siller into the bride's hand; the money was given to you that you might do so.'"

Mr. Henderson, in his "Folklore of the Northern Counties,"¹ tells us that throughout Cleveland, he who gives away the bride claims the first kiss in right of his temporary paternity. Referring to the custom mentioned above of a kiss from the clergyman being expected by the bride, a correspondent says that only a few years before

¹ P. 39.

he wrote, "a fair lady from Durham, who was married in the south of England, so undoubtedly reckoned on the clerical salute that, after waiting for it in vain, she boldly took the initiative, and bestowed a kiss upon the much amazed south country vicar."

At Knutsford, Cheshire, on the occasion of a wedding, when the bride has set out for church, a relative invariably spreads on the pavement, which is composed of pebbles, a quantity of silver sand, there called "greet," in the forms of wreaths of flowers, and writes with the same material wishes for her happiness. This, of course, is soon discovered by others, and immediately, especially if the bride and bridegroom are favourites, there appears before most of the houses numerous flowers in sand. It is said that the custom arose from the only church which they had being without bells, and therefore the people adopted it to give notice of a wedding. On the return of a party from church it is usual to throw money to the boys, and if this is omitted they keep up a cry of "A butter-milk wedding."¹

I learn from *Notes and Queries* that at Monkswearmouth a custom is sometimes observed of sprinkling with sawdust the road by which a wedding procession is to go to church. Sea sand was formerly used. This is only done for marriages in church.²

The Vicar of Cranbrook in Kent tells me that it is the custom in his parish, when a newly married couple leave the church to strew the path with the emblems of the bridegroom's calling, so that carpenters walk on shavings, gardeners on flowers, farmers on cut grass, shoemakers on leather parings, etc. He adds, "I lately officiated at a butcher's wedding here. On leaving the church, not only were sheep skins laid down to the church gates to walk on, but two men, each with a lamb in his arms, decked with

¹ *Notes and Queries*, Dec. 24, 1853.

² *Ibid.*, March 4, 1876.

wedding favours, gravely placed themselves at the head of the procession."

I fancy that this custom may be confined to Kent, for the only other instance that I have heard of was told to me by the widow of the late rector of Harrietsbam in that county. This lady remembers a carpenter being married there in winter, and the people strewed the church path with shavings for the bride and bridegroom to walk over after they left the church.

In Cumberland, as I understand, it is quite against the rule for the fathers and mothers of the couple to be united to attend a marriage. The Rev. A. G. Loftie of Beckermest tells me that he has had but two fathers doing so in nine years, and only three in twelve years. An old farmer who lived on the border of Scotland gave as a reason for this, that the idea is still in force that the bridegroom runs away with the bride without the parents' consent. The old custom was for him to take her up behind him on his horse, and to ride away with her.

There is, I am told, in the eastern counties a popular dislike on the part of newly married couples to sign their names in the Church Register, preferring to put a mark instead, even though they can write very fairly. I have no idea as to the meaning of this.

In his "Folklore of the Northern Counties," Mr. Henderson relates a singular local custom which still exists in the village of Whitburn, near Sunderland. It is, he says, usual there to send what are called "hot pots" to the church to meet the bride and bridegroom as they come out. A gentleman of that place thus describes his own marriage: "After the vestry scene, the bridal party having formed in procession on leaving the church, we were stopped in the porch by a row of five or six women ranged on our left hand, each holding a large mug with a cloth over it. These were in turn handed to me, and handed by me to my wife,

who, after taking a sip, returned it to me. It was then handed to the next couple, and so on in the same form to all the party. The composition in these mugs was mostly, I am sorry to say, simply horrible ; one or two were very fair, and one very good. They are sent to the church by all classes, and are considered a great compliment. I have never heard of the custom elsewhere. Here it has existed beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant, and an aged fishwoman, who has been married some sixty-five years, tells us that at her wedding there were seventy hot pots."

May not Shakespeare be alluding to this custom, or to one akin to it, when, in "The Taming of the Shrew," he says:—

"After many ceremonies done,
He calls for wine. A health, quoth he, as if
He had been aboard carousing to his mates
After a storm ; quaffed off the muscadel,
And threw the sops all in the sexton's face,
Having no other reason
But that his beard grew thin and hungerly,
And seemed to ask him sops as he was drinking."¹

A correspondent to *Notes and Queries*, some thirty or more years back, wrote as follows:—"On the occasion of my marriage in Glamorganshire, nearly twenty years ago, and in passing through the village adjoining that in which the ceremony had been performed, my carriage was stayed by the villagers, holding a band of twisted evergreens and flowers, who good-humouredly refused to let my wife and self pass until we had paid them a toll."²

Very much like this is the following:—"A gentleman states that when he was holding a curacy in Somersetshire, adjoining the Bristol Channel, the village children, on the occasion of a wedding, used to fasten the gates of the

¹ Act iii., scene 2.

² *Notes and Queries* (1858), p. 48.

church with evergreens and flowers. The floral bond a silver key never failed to unloose.¹

A singular custom, says Mr. Henderson,² prevails at the village of Belford in Northumberland of making the bridal pair, with their attendants, leap over a stone placed in their path outside the church porch. This is called the "louping" or "petting" stone, and it is said on the spot that the bride must leave all her pets and humours behind her when she crosses it. At the neighbouring village of Embleton, two stout young lads place a wooden bench across the door of the church porch, assist the bride, bridegroom, and her friends to surmount the obstacle, and then look out for a donation from the bridegroom.

At Crosby Ravensworth, Westmoreland, a similar custom is in vogue. When the service is over, and the bridal party is about to leave the church, the children from the village school congregate round the door, and hold the handle, so as to prevent egress, until the bridegroom has passed some coin under the door. A further scramble for halfpence is looked for at the churchyard gate.

Although this volume is professedly confined to the recording of church customs, perhaps a Scottish Presbyterian usage may be introduced here without impropriety, as it bears upon what has been related above.

It is well known that in the Scottish Establishment the marriage ceremony is often performed at the house of the bride. About the time it is expected that the young couple will start upon their honeymoon jaunt, all the boys and girls in the neighbourhood assemble in front of the house, and amuse themselves by calling out "Bell money," "Bell money," "Shabby wedding," "Shabby wedding—cannot spare a bawbee." These shouts are redoubled when the door is opened to let the bride and bridegroom out, who

¹ *Notes and Queries* (1858), p. 178.

² "Folklore of the Northern Counties," p. 38.

are accompanied to the carriage by most of the company. And as the pushing of the crowd would be inconvenient, someone of the party at this moment showers a lot of coppers and small silver amongst them, thereby drawing their attention from the young folks, who, under cover of this diversion, are driven off.¹

The wedding gifts are not always donations of money. Another writer gives the following description of a custom witnessed by himself at a wedding in the East Riding of Yorkshire. He says that on the bride alighting from her carriage at her father's door, a plate covered with morsels of bridecake was flung from the window of the second storey upon the heads of the crowd congregated in the streets below, and the divination, I was told, consists in observing the fate which attends its downfall. If it reaches the ground in safety without being broken, the omen is a most unfavourable one. If, on the other hand, the plate is shattered to pieces, and the more the better, the auspices are looked upon as most happy.²

And while thus incidentally touching upon what may be termed a marriage superstition, I may mention that Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite, F.S.A., tells me that in the south of Yorkshire an idea prevails that during the marriage ceremony the person who speaks the loudest in answer to the question put by the clergyman will die first.

I have given various examples of friendly feeling as exhibited in connection with weddings by those not immediately concerned. The following instance of a curse pronounced on such an occasion carries with it a certain amount of interest, though not of the most agreeable kind.

During March, 1850, the clergyman married a couple in the Parish Church of St. Peter's, Thanet. An old woman, an aunt of the bridegroom, displeased at the marriage, stood

¹ *Notes and Queries*, March 3, 1855.

² *Ibid.*, June 4, 1853.

at the church gate, and pronounced an anathema upon the married pair. She then bought a new broom, went home, swept her house, and hung the broom over the door. By this she intimated her rejection of her nephew, and forbade him to enter her house. She had probably some precedent for this, but I have not been able to discover what it was.¹

Let us turn now to a more pleasant marriage usage. The Vicar of Helpringham, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, states that from time immemorial it has been the custom for the wedding party to accompany the bride and bridegroom in a walk round the village in the evening after tea on the wedding day. This is still done, but it is not so common as it once was. Mr. Micklethwaite tells me that he has himself witnessed such a procession.

We find in various connections some odd fancies prevailing amongst our ancestors relative to the use of church doors. Here is one related to me by the Rev. A. C. Lefroy. At Longdon, near Tewkesbury, the people had a custom at weddings of going in at one door and out at another. This, says my correspondent, I learnt when I was repairing my church on first coming to the parish in 1868, and happened to close the second outlet.

Akin to this I may mention what a lady at Torquay has told me as to an idea popularly entertained at Morchard Bishop in North Devon. It was there thought ill luck for a newly married pair if they chanced to leave the church by the small door on the north side, which was always used by the clergy.

Not many years ago, as the vicar informs me, when a wedding of any importance occurred at Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, the altar used to be covered with a coarse table-cloth, and two oval glass dishes were placed thereon together with the register books.

In the section following on "Funeral Customs" it will be

¹ *Notes and Queries*, April 6, 1850.

seen that there was formerly a practice in some parishes for persons attending to place an offering upon the altar for the clergyman. It seems probable that the glass dishes were intended to receive donations from the wedding party when they went to the altar to assist in the signing of the register.

A custom prevails, or did prevail, in Manchester, as the Rev. J. A. Lacey tells me, of giving to the first couple married in a new church a Bible— of the “Family” variety if the priest is generous, and can afford it—and also a Prayer Book.

Here is a curious item which I cull from *Notes and Queries*. The writer states that he visited the quaint old church of St. John-in-the-Wilderness, near Exmonth, in 1850, and asked the old man who points out its battered beauties why there were still books in the reading-desk, adding:—“He informed me that marriage and funeral services were still performed there. This, however, is the only authority I have on the subject.”¹

There is a very wholesome tradition in some parts of the country that a person ought not to be married until he has been confirmed. A former assistant curate of Helmsley in the North Riding of Yorkshire states that this was the prevailing feeling in that parish when he was there more than twenty years ago. Indeed, once a young man asked him as a great favour to marry him on the promise that he would be confirmed on the first opportunity. In the parish of Legbourne, Lincolnshire, the vicar tells me that the same feeling is prevalent.

I find that a very curious custom exists in some villages in the north of Nottinghamshire. Wheat is thrown over a newly married couple with the exclamation, “Bread for life and pudding for ever,” which, I suppose, is intended to mean, “May you not only have bare necessities but also be

¹ *Notes and Queries*, October 4, 1851.

able to afford some luxuries." In Sussex also, I believe, that wheat is thrown on such occasions. The throwing of rice at the carriage when the newly joined couple are departing, which is a very general custom, is akin to this, and is intended, of course, to represent symbolically a wish that the bridal may be a fruitful one.

The following custom I imagine to be peculiar to the Scottish Establishment, but I may, perhaps, introduce it as an illustration. Speaking of what took place in the last century, a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* says that, "In their marriages (Inverness is especially mentioned) they do not use the ring as in England; but the bride, if she be of the middle class, is conducted to the church by two men, who take her under the arms and hurry the poor unwilling creature along the street, as a pickpocket is dragged to a horsepond in London, she having been attended the evening before by the bridesmaids, who, with great ceremony, washed her feet."¹

An odd formality, I understand, took place in Galashiels in 1867, which the parties believed to constitute a legal marriage. They each took a handful of meal and knelt down facing each other, after placing a basin between them. Both then put their handful of meal in the basin and mixed it, in token that they would not sever till death did them part. After swearing to this effect on the Bible, they rose up and declared themselves man and wife. This was chronicled in the *Scotsman* at the time, but I am unable to give the reference.

Anyone who cares to turn to February 15th in Chambers' "Book of Days" will find some very curious information about odd marriages, which at one time or another have taken place. The article is far too long to quote, but one or two extracts may be interesting.

It is noted that the announcements of marriages pub-

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1754), p. 370.

lished in the *Gentleman's Magazine* during the greater part of the last century included very precise statements of the portions brought by the several brides. Thus :—

“Mr. N. Tillotson, an eminent preacher among the people called Quakers, and a relative of Archbishop Tillotson, to Miss ——, with £7,000.”

Here is another excerpt :—

“Mr. P. Bowen to Miss Nicholls of Queenhithe, with £10,000.”

The next bridegroom appears to have done rather better pecuniarily :—

“Sir George C—— to the Widow Jones, with £1,000 a year, besides ready-money.”

The article above mentioned gives some quaint instances of persons who, so to speak, had been very much married. Though some of them are outside the immediate object of our inquiry it seems a pity not to place them on record.

The writer says :—“It is usually considered a noteworthy circumstance for a man or woman to have been married three times; but of old this number would have been thought little of. St. Jerome mentions a widow who married her twenty-second husband, who in his turn had been married to twenty wives—surely an experienced couple! A woman named Elizabeth Masi, who died in Florence, in 1768, had been married to seven husbands, all of whom she outlived. She married the last of the seven at the age of seventy. When on her deathbed she recalled the good and bad points of each of her husbands, and having impartially weighed them in the balance, she

singled out her fifth spouse as the favourite, and desired that her remains might be interred near his. The death of a soldier is recorded in 1784, who had had five wives, and his widow, aged ninety, wept over the grave of her fourth husband. The writer who mentioned these facts naïvely added, 'The said soldier was very much attached to the marriage state.' There is an account of a gentleman who had been married to four wives, and who lived to be a hundred and fifteen years old. When he died he left twenty-three children alive and well, some of the said children being from three to four score. A gentleman died at Bordeaux, in 1772, who had been married sixteen times."

In *Notes and Queries* of July 29, 1876, a number of instances are given, ranging from 1723 to 1840, of women having been married "in the smock" or in a sheet. This was done from a mistaken notion that it freed the husband from responsibility for the woman's debts, and in one case (Whitehaven, 1766) it was to protect the woman's property from the creditors of her husband. In another case the lady, it is said, came to church without any clothes on at all, but the parson refused to officiate. I have read of a clergyman who, under similar circumstances, went through the service, on the ground that nothing was said in the rubric about the woman's dress, as is the case in the churching service. This gentleman evidently did not adopt the view taken by the judges in the Maconackie case, that "omission is prohibition."

In the same publication, under date March 5, 1853, a writer states that he remembers that his brother, when curate of a parish in Lincolnshire, married a woman enveloped only in a sheet. I cite this instance to show that the strange custom has continued to within a measurable distance of our own day. This is the latest case that I know of.

Among the many clerical scandals prevalent in the former half of the last century were what were known as "Fleet marriages," which were so common that between October 19, 1704, and February 12, 1705, no fewer than two hundred and ninety-five were celebrated within the "Rules," without licence or certificate of banns. The marriages were generally performed in some low public-house or barber's shop. The officiants were clergymen of the lowest type, who were confined in the Fleet prison for debt. Sometimes publicans kept these clerics on a salary of twenty shillings a week. Advertisements were exhibited or published, inviting people to come and be married without the usual restrictions. Here is a specimen:—"G.R. At the true chapel at the Old Red Hand and Mitre, three doors up Fleet Lane, and next door to the White Swan, marriages are performed by authority by the Rev. Mr. Symson, educated at the university of Cambridge, and late chaplain to the Earl of Rothes. N.B.—Without imposition." Touts were employed to get customers, and received a shilling each. Some of these clergymen officiated at their own lodgings, but the majority were employed by the keepers of the marriage houses. The landlord usually acted as clerk, and if the clergyman were not salaried, they divided the fee between them. Each marriage house had a regular register.

In 1821 the Government purchased some of these registers, and deposited them with the Registrar of the Consistory Court of London. Thus the scandalous practices which had been enacted at the Fleet became publicly known. Many of these entries were falsified, as, for example:—

"5 Nov. 1742 was married Benjamin Richards of the parish of St. Martins in the Fields, Br., and Judith Lance Do. Sp. at the Bull and Garter, and gave [a guinea] for an

ante-date to March y^e. 11th in the same year, which Lilley complied with, and put 'em in his book accordingly, there being a vacancy in the book suitable to the time."

Here is another:—

"Mr. Comyns gave me half a guinea to find a bridegroom, and defray all expences. Parson 2s. 6d., Husband do., and 5s. 6d. myself."

Both these entries seem to have come from private registers. It was no uncommon thing to provide a bridegroom. A case is known in which a man was married four times, receiving five shillings on each occasion "for his trouble."

Pennant says that in walking by the prison in his youth, he had been often accosted with, "Sir, will you please to walk in and be married?" And he states that painted signs of a male and female hand conjoined, with the inscription, "Marriages performed within," were common along the building.

Whoever wanted to be married quietly and quickly, without exposure or inquiry, resorted to the Fleet. The registers contain the names of all kinds of persons, from the barber to the officer in the guards, from the pauper to the peer. Chambers, who has a long article about these marriages in his "Book of Days," under July 24, gives a list of aristocratic names as appearing in the Fleet registers. The following covers a good deal of ground:—"Magistrates and parochial authorities helped to swell the gains of the Fleet parsons, the former settling certain cases by sending the accused to the altar instead of to the gallows, and the latter getting rid of a female pauper by giving a gratuity to some poor wretch belonging to another parish to take her "for better, for worse."

Things got to such a pitch that, in 1753, a Bill was introduced, which became law the following year, making the solemnisation of matrimony in any other place than a church or chapel, and without banns or licence, felony, punishable by transportation, and declaring all such marriages void.

The chaplain of the Savoy, however, on the plea that being extra-parochial it was not bound by the new Marriage Law, ventured to issue licences. A public advertisement was actually put forth in 1754 to this effect:—"By authority, marriages performed with the utmost privacy, decency, and regularity at the ancient Royal Chapel of St. John the Baptist in the Savoy, where regular and authentic registers have been kept from the time of the Reformation (being two hundred years and upwards) to this day. The expense, not more than one guinea, the five shilling stamp included. There are five private ways by land to this chapel, and two by water." In 1755, the chaplain married no less than 1,190 couples. The authorities began to move, and a curate—one Grierson—was appointed, the chaplain disappearing from public, but still issuing licences. The result was that they were both tried, convicted, and sentenced to fourteen years transportation, and 400 marriages were declared void.¹

The term "May Fair Marriages" is a more or less familiar one. The Rev. Alexander Keith had a chapel there, built in 1730, and carried on a great business in matrimony. He is said to have married nearly 200 couples in a day, and the day before the Marriage Act came into operation no less than 51 couples were united there.

But if for a time there were such scandals in the English Church, the Presbyterians of Scotland, at any rate, were not in a position to throw stones.

About 1745 there existed a sort of Gretna Green in the

¹ "Book of Days," vol. ii., p. 120.

Canongate, Edinburgh. A gentleman writing from Perth, quotes the "Newgate Kalendar" (vol. ii., p. 269):—"It was customary for some of the ministers of the Church of Scotland who were out of employment to marry people at the ale-houses in the same manner that the Fleet marriages were conducted in London. Sometimes people of fortune thought it prudent to apply to these marriage brokers, but as their chief business lay amongst the lower ranks of people they were deridingly called by the name of 'Buckle the Beggars.' Most of these marriages were solemnised at public-houses in the Canongate."¹

Not long ago public interest was excited by a breach of promise case in which the jury found a verdict of £10,000 damages for the lady plaintiff. Few persons are aware that in 1747, one Miss Davids, of Castle Yard, Holborn, brought such an action against the Rev. Dr. Wilson, Prebendary of Worcester, Canon of Lincoln, and Vicar of Newark-on-Trent. The damages were laid at £10,000, and the jury gave a verdict for the plaintiff with £7,000 damages. In this case it would seem that there had been some kind of betrothal ceremony of a formal character, for the writer of the paragraph in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, whence I gather the information, goes on to state that "they both had declared the same publicly in a solemn manner."²

What were known as "Penny Weddings" were formerly common in Scotland. When a servant maid had behaved well in a place, her master and mistress frequently made what was called a "Penny Wedding" for her when she married. They provided a dinner or supper, and invited all their relations and friends, and in the evening, when there was music and dancing, the bride went round the room, and saluted all the men, during which ceremony

¹ *Notes and Queries*, April 17, 1852.

² *Gentleman's Magazine* (1747), p. 293.

every person in the company put money into a dish, according to his or her inclination and ability, and by this means the newly married couple often procured a sum sufficient for persons in their condition to begin the world with very comfortably.¹

The following information has been sent to me by the Rev. Earnest Geldart, Rector of Little Braxted, Witham, Essex, where, by the way, is one of the tiniest, but one of the prettiest country churches that I ever saw. In looking over the Register of Marriages in his church he found the following item :—

“ May 21, 1730, John Fitch, single man . . . Mary Borley, single woman . . . were married by licence.”

This, my friend tells me, is the first entry in the register of Little Braxted Church, and, taken by itself, is not very remarkable; but when the next entry is the same (with change of name), and the next but one again the same, it naturally occurs to one that some cause has been at work to produce an effect so apparently unlikely in a small country parish a hundred and fifty years ago.

The rector accordingly set himself to work to analyse the marriage returns, with the following results :—

1730.	2	Marriages by Licence.	1	by Banns.
1733.	1	”	0	”
1735.	1	”	1	”
1743.	3	”	1	”
1746.	1	”	0	”
1749.	1	”	0	”
1751.	2	”	0	”
1752.	1	”	0	”
1754.	1	”	0	”

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1754), p. 370.

From 1755 the marriages were by banns, or "bands," as some of the officiating ministers preferred to spell it, with few exceptions, till the licensing system seems to take a fresh vitality in 1784, when this entry occurs:—

"Marriages entered according to Act of Parliament by licence granted instead of stamps."

What the cause of this "licence" was may, the rector thinks, be gathered from an examination of the dates (when they are given) of the banns.

Usually the entry contains no reference to any particular date of "asking," but simply states in these or similar words that the contracting parties had been "asked in church on three several Sundays, and no impediment alleged."

When, however, the register enters into detail, the dates stand thus:—Aug. 5, Aug. 19, Sept. 12; Jan. 12, Jan. 26, Feb. 9, etc. etc. Mr. Geldart continues:—

"Here, I think, is the solution of the problem. Why should labouring single men and single women seek marriage by licence, whether granted by the Archdeacon of Colchester, or by licence instead of stamps, according to Act of Parliament?

"Because the Parish Church was so seldom opened that it was difficult to get banns published even at intervals of a fortnight. The officiating minister makes no reference to clerical liberality, but it seems probable that the non-resident rector preferred to pay the cost of stamps or licence on the rare occasion of a wedding, rather than be taxed by the provision of regular duty.

"How rare were the visits of the rector may be judged from the fact that no entry stands in the rector's *name* from the beginning to the end of the book—1730 to 1813; for the first three years, however, the entries are unsigned, but

written in a hand bearing some resemblance to that of 'Norman Mead, rector,' who wrote the title of the book. After that come entries by 'curates,' 'ministers,' 'officiating ministers,' following each other in swift succession.

"At the end of one entry stands written in a triumphant flourish :—'Duty paid thus far.'"

A few words on the taxes on marriages, etc., imposed in the reign of William III., will be interesting. M. C. Ross writes :—"The first instance of which I am aware of a tax on marriages in this country occurs in the 5th of William and Mary, c. 21. The war in which William engaged soon rendered it necessary to tax other incidents of humanity, and accordingly the 6th and 7th of William III., c. 6, was passed, granting to His Majesty certain rights and duties upon marriages, births, deaths, and burials, and upon bachelors and widowers (a widely spread net), for the term of five years, 'for carrying on the war against France with vigour.'" The taxes on births, marriages, and burials were continued indefinitely by 7 and 8 William III., c. 35. I know not when this Act was repealed, but by 23 George III., c. 67, taxes were again imposed on burials, births, marriages, and christenings, and by 25 George III., c. 75, the taxes were extended to Dissenters. By 34 George III., c. 11, these taxes were repeated, and they ceased on October 1, 1794."¹

¹ *Notes and Queries*, June 22, 1850.

CHAPTER VI.

FUNERAL CUSTOMS.

"LET'S talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs."¹ These words, which Shakespeare puts into the king's mouth, though appropriate enough to open the subject which we are about to consider, will not, I trust, be regarded as expressive of the dolesomeness of this portion of my book. Although the subject is a solemn one, I venture to think that readers may peruse it without any fear of its bringing on an attack of the "dismals."

It is, as everybody knows, a very usual thing now for church folk to have choral funerals. There are, however, still amongst us persons who regard such functions as mere modern "ritualistic" innovations. It will be well for them to know that chorally conducted funerals were common three hundred years ago. Indeed, in upper and middle class funerals (in towns at any rate) music, as a rule, formed a part in the post-Reformation Church of England in years long gone by. In his "History of the Puritans," Neal tells us that Mr. Cradley, who was the intruding minister at Cripplegate Church, seeing a corpse being borne for burial there, attended by clerks in their surplices, threatened to shut the doors against them. The singing men, however, resisted, resolving to go through with their work till the alderman's deputy threatened to lay them by the heels for breaking the peace. Upon this, we are told, they retired, but they complained to the archbishop, who

¹ Richard III., act iii., scene 2.

sent for Cradley, deprived him of his living, and confined him to his house for saying that he would not suffer the wolf to come to his flock. From Strype's "History of Parker" we learn that such choral funerals were customary at the time concerning which he was writing.

It may perhaps be remembered that Shakespeare, in the play of "Cymbeline," when describing the preparation of Imogen's apparently dead body for its burial, makes Arviragus say:—

"Be't so,
And let us, Polydore, though now our voices
Have got the mannish crack, sing him to the ground,
As once our mother, use like note and words."

From this it may be inferred that a choir of *boys* was in Shakespeare's day the customary use at funerals.

Anyone who would have confirmation of this could scarcely do better than turn over the pages of the curious and valuable "Diary of Henry Machyn: Citizen and Merchant Tailor of London, from 1550 to 1563." In these modern days we should call him "undertaker," and I shall have to quote from his book later on. As regards the point now being dealt with, it seems quite worth while to transcribe three entries in his diary which occur in the same page of the Camden Society's printed edition of the MSS. volume now before me.¹ They relate to the year 1560, *i.e.* Queen Elizabeth's second year. It will be observed that "spellynge" was not one of the writer's strong points.

"The xij day, the wyche was the vj day of January, was bered in Sant Benetts at Powlles warff Master Antony Hyll, on the quen(s) gentyllan of — and a xvj clarkes syngyng to the chyrche, and to the berehyng."

¹ P. 247.

"The xvj day of January was bered at St. Aus(tins) Jakobe the hussar¹ of Powlles Skolle; at hys berehyng wher a xx clarkes syngyng you to the chyrche, and [there] was a sermon."

This extract shows that funerals with choral adjuncts were not at that day confined to persons of social standing, or of municipal importance.

The next entry in the diary is somewhat different in character, but for that reason perhaps the more valuable.

"The xvij day of January was bered in Sant Peters in Cornehylle Master Flammoke, grocer, and he gayff mony gownes of blake, and he gave to pore men —, and he was cared to the chyrche withowt syngyng or clarks, and at the chyrche a sphalme songe after Genevay, and a sermon and bered contenentt."

The ringing of the "Passing Bell" on the event of a parishioner being moribund is a very old custom. So far as post-Reformation custom is concerned, we find the practice enjoined by the advertisements of 1564, wherein it is enjoined:—"That when any Christian body is in passing that the bell be tolled, and that the curate be specially called for to comfort the sick person; and after the time of his passing to ring no more than one short peal, and one before the burial, and another short peal after the burial."

It is worth noting that the substance of this direction is embodied in the 67th canon of A.D. 1603.

"Passing," of course, signifies "departing," and the bell was intended as a warning to those alive and well that one of their neighbours was passing to an onward stage in life's journey. No doubt the original design was to ask

¹ Usher.

the prayers of all who heard it in behalf of the departing soul, and as Shakespeare says in "Henry IV." :—

" And his tongue
Sounds ever after as a sudden bell
Remembered knolling a departed friend."

The custom of ringing the church bell in connection with the death of a parishioner is a much less religious custom than it formerly was. It has degenerated into a mere announcement to the parishioners that one of their neighbours has passed a step forward, and is now no longer in visible contact with his friends on earth. Wheatley, whose well-known commentary on the Book of Common Prayer first appeared in A.D. 1710, takes the high religious view of the object of the passing bell. He says:—"Our church, in imitation of the saints of former ages, calls on the minister and others who are at hand to assist their brother in his last extremity. In order to this she directs that when anyone is passing out of this life a bell shall be tolled," etc. etc.

I gather from Dr. Rock¹ that in Anglo-Saxon times the "passing bell," strictly so-called, was not in use, but that only the death knell was rung, as is customary now. He writes:—"In all monasteries, whenever anyone belonging to it died, the death knell was rung, as is customary now, and though it were the depth of night, no sooner heard they that well-known bell swinging forth slowly and sadly its mournful sound, than all the inmates of that house rose and knelt down by their bedsides, or hurried to the church, and prayed for the soul of the brother or sister that moment gone.

If what is understood by the "passing bell" (N.B., "passing," not "passed") was rung anywhere, it would

¹ "The Church of our Fathers," vol. ii., p. 27.

surely be rung in a monastic house. But Dr. Rock's silence with respect to it seems to indicate that the custom was not in use at the time to which he refers.

A good deal of stress used to be laid by the authorities upon the due performance of the custom which we are considering. Thus we find in the Chichester Articles of Inquiry, A.D. 1638, under the heading, "Visitation of the sicke and persons at the point of death":—"In the meantime is there a passing bell tolled that they who are within hearing of it may be moved in their private devotions to recommend the state of the departing soule into the hands of their Redeemer, a duty which all Christians are bound to out of a fellow-feeling of our common mortality."

In olden days the passing bell was sometimes called the "soul bell," of which term Bishop Hall says:—"We call them 'soul bells,' because they signify the departure of the soul, not because they help the passage of the soul."

Judging from what Bourne says in his *Antiquitates Vulgares*, it appears that in the Puritan days the tolling of the passing bell was regarded as superstitious, and was consequently given up. The dates in the following extract should be carefully noted. Everybody knows that King Charles I. was beheaded in 1649, and that until 1660, when the Restoration took place, the Puritans reigned supreme.

In a vestry book belonging to the Chapel of All Saints in Newcastle-on-Tyne, it is observable that the tolling of the bell is not mentioned in the parish accounts during the earlier portion of this interval. However, at a vestry holden January 21, 1655, there was made the following order:—

"Whereas, for some years past, the collecting of the duty of bell and tolling hath been foreborne and laid aside, which hath much lessened the revenue of the church, by which and such-like means it is brought into dilapidation,

and having now taken the same into serious consideration, and fully debated the objections made by some against the same, and having had the judgment of our ministers concerning any superstition that might be in it, which being clear, it is this day ordered that from henceforth the church officer appointed thereunto do collect the same, and bring the money unto the churchwardens, and that those who desire to have the use of the bells may freely have them as formerly, paying the accustomed fees."

Bourne seems to have had a very distinct idea as to the elasticity of the Puritan conscience, for he humorously adds:—"It is certain they laid it aside because they thought it superstitious, and it is probable if they had not wanted money they had not seen the contrary."

It is as well to notify what these fees were in amount. Strutt in his "Manners and Customs" quotes from the parish books of Wolchurch thus:—

"The clerke to have for tollynge of the passynge belle for manne, womanne, or childes, if it be in the day fourpence, if it be in the night, eightpence for the same."

It seems to have been the general custom to arrange the tolling at the funeral in such wise as to indicate to all within hearing whether the deceased were man, woman, or child, the strokes of the hammer being in threes in honour of the Blessed Trinity. These strokes were called "Tellers." Thus three tellers denoted the burial of a child, six that of a woman, and nine that of a man. Hence the common saying that "nine tailors (tellers) made a man."

The next point to deal with is the garb which of yore was commonly used at funerals.

At Ballintoy, county Antrim, it was, and I believe still is,

customary for the people to wear white linen scarves, or in case of poverty white calico. These are gathered into a shoulder knot, and worn diagonally across the breast. This custom was observed by rich and poor alike, and both at men's and women's funerals. The clergyman who always received one of these scarves was wont to hang it over the side of the reading desk.

The late Rev. Robert Howard told me that in Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, in each of which localities he had held parochial charges, it was, and perhaps still is, the custom for the friends of the deceased to provide a broad black silk scarf with a shoulder knot to be worn by the officiating clergyman across the surplice at a funeral, and also on the Sunday following, when the mourners were always present at divine service. These scarves were regarded as the perquisites of the priest's wife, who stored them up till there was enough material to make a silk dress or mantle. I myself remember that the same custom prevailed in Warwickshire in my young days, but it was, of course, confined to those persons who were well off.

A custom akin to this has been reported to me by a lady at Ventnor as being usual at Bradford-on-Avon. The Sunday after a funeral the vicars' and clerks' hats, with imposing hat bands, were hung on two nails on the desk which in past days formed one side of the vicarage square baize-lined pew.

At Ashbourne, Derbyshire, it was, and perhaps still is, the custom, in case of funerals from the workhouse, for the poor folk who are inmates, and who attend the funeral as bearers, to appear habited in long black cloaks.

Black and white "frocks" were formerly worn at Arundel by men of the poorer class when they went to a funeral. Of late years, however, these have been gradually going out of use. The last funeral at which all the bearers wore white

frocks took place some twenty or more years ago. Black frocks are still, I believe, occasionally worn there as mourning, and are to be seen in church now and then. Fifty years ago frocks were worn by all, old and young; white in summer, and brown or slate coloured in winter. The parish clerk appeared in his desk vested like the rest of the poorer members of the congregation, in a white or slate coloured frock.

My late housekeeper, who was brought up near Alton, Hants, told me that in her younger days what were locally called "round frocks," which I remember went under the name of "smock frocks" in the midland counties, were always worn at labourers' funerals. Her husband added that in the same locality, on the anniversary of the village club, all the members were bound to wear the round frock till after dinner under a penalty of five shillings; the fine going, of course, to the club funds.

In Cornwall, I understand, it used to be the custom at children's funerals for little girls, dressed in light colours, to carry one of their own sex and age to the grave.

And as to the construction of graves, I can hear of nothing peculiar save in the south-western part of England. The vicar of St. Cuthbert's (Wells) has told me that it was formerly the custom there to plaster the inside of the grave when the deceased was a plasterer by trade. Some forty or more years ago the churchyard was closed by order of council, and an attempt was made to continue the old usage in the cemetery. One such case is known to have occurred among the earlier interments there, but the practice was stopped, I believe, by the Burial Board.

When I was assistant curate at St. Mary Church, near Torquay, some forty years ago, the graves there were always most carefully made, and were all lined with white plaster. This must have been an ancient custom, for I

remember that when an old grave in the somewhat crowded churchyard happened to be broken into by the sexton's spade, the white line of plaster was distinctly visible. In my time the soil was scrupulously removed from the edge of the grave, and the ground made quite flat and smooth. About six inches or so of the surface round the excavation, which was always cut very clean, fine black ashes were spread as a sort of border, and very neat and nice it looked. I do not know if the old custom is still retained.

As regards the treatment of brick graves in South Devon, the custom has been to whitewash the bricks in the lower part, and to colour the upper part black.

Some twelve months ago a maiden lady friend of mine, who was much beloved by all who knew her, was buried in the cemetery at Teignmouth. She lay in her coffin with a chaplet of eucharis and lilies of the valley on her brow, and the sides of the grave were lined with moss.

We may now go on to inquire how the body was conveyed to the grave, and the ceremonies which accompanied the removal. Some of these usages are still kept up.

The *Nottinghamshire Advertiser* of March 20, 1877, describing a village funeral, states :—"The coffin was borne by napkins, which we may observe is an old Nottinghamshire custom."

In Lincolnshire, as I am informed, the same practice is, or has been, followed, as also in Devon and Cornwall. I myself remember that, in my younger days, napkins were always so used in Warwickshire. Within the last few years I have myself had them used at the funeral of a relative which I personally conducted. In this instance long pieces of strong linen towelling were employed. These were passed through the handles, and underneath the coffin. The bearers wrapped the ends round the fore-arm, and were thus able to carry a great weight with comparative

ease. On this occasion it was necessary to have a leaden coffin.

It is much to be wished that this underhand method of carrying coffins were universal, instead of the unsightly and dangerous practice of having them raised on men's shoulders as is common in London and other places. A great deal of inconvenience and risk of accident would be saved thereby. What can be more unseemly than to witness half a dozen men staggering under a heavy coffin in their endeavour to place it upon the tressles in the nave of the church? Who has not felt on such an occasion an inward fear lest the coffin should fall? Polished tiles form but a very insecure foothold for the bearers, especially in a country place where nailed boots are generally worn, and the men are apt to be awkward.

Mr. J. T. Mickelthwaite, F.S.A., tells me that the use of towels at funerals was customary at Hopton in the parish of Mirfield, Yorkshire, till about half a century ago. Napkins used to be kept at the Hall for that purpose, and were lent to the neighbours when required. The old parish church is about two miles from the village, and down a very steep hill. His aunt, the last of the family who lived at the Hall, stated that the custom of lending the napkins had ceased because once, when they were worn out, she provided new ones of cotton, and the people would not use them, linen being "the proper thing."

Besides these "bearers," as they were called, other things needful for funerals and weddings were kept at the Hall for public use, including two silver cups, one of which—a quart tankard—my friend has in his possession. The last time it was lent the lady above mentioned found a child dragging it full of pebbles across the "fowd," and then, she said, it was time to stop lending. The tankard bears the sign of rough usage, of course, but it will still hold liquor up to within half an inch of the top.

Here is a rather curious development of the above usage.

A friend wrote to me in 1871 to say that at Redcar in Cleveland, in the earlier part of this century, a funeral was preceded by a public breakfast. Then the coffin was carried slung upon towels knotted together, and borne by relays of men to Maroke, up the old "Corpse-way," and bumped upon a heap of stones three times. This was an ancient resting-place at the top of the hill. The "Lamentation of a Sinner" was then sung, and the procession moved to the churchyard, every man, woman, and child receiving a dole of sixpence as they entered.

The "Lamentation of a Sinner" may be found printed at the end of the Metrical Psalms in most old Prayer Books. The first stanza is:—

" O Lord, turn not Thy face away
From him that lies prostrate ;
Lamenting sore his sinful life,
Before Thy mercy's gate."

And the last :—

" Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask,
This is the total sum ;
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit,
O let Thy mercy come."

At Broadwas in Worcestershire it was usual for the bearers, on reaching the church walk, to set down the coffin, and as they stood around to bow to it.¹

A curious Wesleyan usage is worth recording. The Rev. Hastings P. Elwin states that a Wesleyan in Yorkshire gave him an account of the ceremony ordinarily observed up to about thirty years ago on the evening before a burial. All the friends who were to be present at the funeral assembled at the house, and after the customary eating and drinking adjourned to the room where the body

¹ *Notes and Queries*, September 3, 1853.

lay, having a great candle burning beside it, and they grouped around it and sung a hymn.

Hymn singing was not at all uncommon in funeral processions. Thus at Tudhoe, Durham, so late as 1867 hymns were sung by the mourners on their way from the house through the village, and the Rev. J. Eddowes, who was Vicar of Garton-in-the-Wolds, from 1852-1859, says that at that time the custom of singing in processions was observed there. At Highclere, I am told, the parish clerk used to sing the 90th psalm before the corpse on its way to the grave.

Here I may refer to a communication of Dr. Barber of Ulverstone. He says that in the Furness district of North Lancashire the practice of singing hymns at funerals on the way to church is still kept up. Another custom is to give each individual a small cake made of the purest wheaten flour—oatcake being in general use—called arval bread, which he or she is expected to carry home and eat with the rest of the family. The derivation of this word "arval" seems somewhat doubtful. Nick Bailey in his quaint dictionary gives arval or arvil as "a funeral solemnity," and "arvil supper" as a feast given at funerals. He marks it as an old country word. Worcester spells it "arvel," and derives it from the Welsh. A large number of persons were usually "bidden" to these funerals, and it was considered a great slight if each family did not send at least one representative. In some parts, where the parish church was at a considerable distance, the body was carried on a bier, and there were stones set at intervals along the roadside to place it on while the bearers were changing sides. These were called "resting stones." In these districts it was common to distribute the "arval bread" before starting, and each person received a cake and a quarter. The quarter was generally eaten during a halt about halfway to the church.

As to these burial repasts the Rev. R. Bramley of Kirkdale, Yorkshire, has told me that the cake, which in his neighbourhood is handed round at the feast beforehand, is always arranged in a peculiar manner. Should a deceased woman have had a child in her unmarried state the ceremony is omitted, and he adds:—"I think that I am correct in saying that the bell is not rung the usual number of times indicating the sex of the departed. . . . Where I was curate in Cheshire I found an almost invariable accompaniment to the funeral banquet was a kind of thick milk pudding flavoured with cinnamon."

The Rev. G. F. Weston of Crosby Ravensworth, Westmoreland, tells me that in his parish, on the occasion of a funeral, very large numbers of friends and neighbours are invited by messengers sent on what are called "bidding rounds." One or two persons are invited from each house. They are bidden for about 10 o'clock a.m. to the house of the deceased, the hour of "lifting the corpse" is also named, as well as the entertainment provided for visitors. In the case of well-to-do families there is generally dinner prepared at one or both of the village inns. Sometimes as many as eighty or a hundred will have dinner at each. In the case of poorer families refreshment is provided at the house, generally in the shape of a substantial tea.

At the "lifting of the corpse" the people assemble in front of the house, and the coffin is deposited on a couple of chairs, and a hymn is sung. Before entering the churchyard the coffin is rested and another hymn is sung. During the service is sung another hymn. After the service is over at the grave a dole of sixpence is given to each poor person present.

As regards the custom of "bidding rounds," the Rev. H. T. Ellacombe states¹ that at Penrith the town crier gives notice of funerals thus, after ringing his bell—"I am

¹ *Notes and Queries*, April 28, 1855.

to give notice to all friends and neighbours that are inclined to attend the funeral of — of — Street, to attend at — o'clock.”¹

In connection with this part of our subject, the Rev. Mackenzie Walcot tells us that he has twice seen the bellman precede the funeral of undergraduates at Oxford, once to a college chapel, and once to St. Mary’s Church.²

¹ In Paris it is the custom for the gentlefolks to send out “bidding letters” on the occasion of a funeral in the form given below. They are printed on quarto paper, with a black border exactly three quarters of an inch wide. The two which I reproduce were given to me by a friend the last time I was in Paris, and are both of quite recent date. The former was issued by a Roman Catholic family; the latter by a family of Protestants. For obvious reasons the surnames and addresses are suppressed.

M

Le Vicomte DE ———, Monsieur HENRI ———;
 Le Vicomte DE ———, le Comte et la Comtesse DE ———;
 Le Baron et la Baronne DE ———, Monsieur O. ———,
 Capitaine ——— le Marquis et la Marquise D’———,
 Monsieur DE ——— Capitaine d’Etat-Major ———, et la
 Comtesse ———;
 Mademoiselle ALICE DE ———, Monsieur RAOUL ———,
 Mademoiselle ELISABETH ———, Monsieur CHARLES ———,
 Mesdemoiselles MARIE, JEANNE ET PAULINE ———;
 Monsieur ARISTE ———, Monsieur ANATOLE ———,
 Madame ———;
 Messieurs PAUL, RENÉ et GASTON ———;
 Le Marquis et le Comte DE ———, le Comte et le Vicomte
 ———, Monsieur DE ———, Lieutenant de Dragons, et la
 Baronne ——— le Général Baron ———;

Ont l’honneur de vous faire part de la perte douloureuse qu’ils
 viennent d’éprouver en la personne de

Madame la Vicomtesse de ———

Née ———

leur épouse, mère, fille, belle-fille, sœur, belle-sœur, tante, nièce et
 cousine, décédée, munie des Sacraments de l’Eglise, le ———
 188, en son domicile, rue ———, n° —, a l’âge de 39 ans.

PRIEZ POUR ELLE.

² *Notes and Queries*, Oct. 20, 1855.

To South country people the term "lifting" the corpse may seem strange. It may be well to remind those readers who are wont from time to time to send materials to be dyed at Messrs. Pullars' works at Perth, that the label which the firm sends round to its clients is printed in the following form. This shows that the word "lift," as used in the North, is equivalent to "called for," "taken up," or "collected," in South country language:—

"KEEP VERY DRY.

TO MESSRS. J. PULLAR & SONS.

(HEAD OFFICE)

CHENIES ST., TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD,
LONDON.

Lifted at . . . o'clock on . . . day of . . . 188 ."

It will be seen that I copy a recent label.

M

Vous êtes prié d'assister aux Convoi et Service de
Monsieur Alexandre Johan Henry de _____,

ancien Ministre Plénipotentiaire.

Grand Officer de la Légion d'honneur et de plusieurs Ordres
Etrangers,

décédé subitement, le ———, à l'âge de 71 ans ;

Qui se feront le Dimanche 6 du courant, à 3 heures très-précises,
au Temple du St. Esprit (rue Roquépine, 5)

On se réunira à la maison mortuaire :

—, rue de —————.

“Jésus lui dit : Je suis la résurrection en la vie. Celui qui croit en moi vivra, quand même il serait mort.”

St. Jean. Ch. xi., v. 25.

De la part de Messieurs Jules, Louis et Henri ———, ses
fils, Monsieur Henri ———, son gendre, et de tout la famille.

L'Inhumation aura lieu à ————— (Seine en Oise).

I am told that in Scotland the neighbours are invited to ordinary burials by a man who goes about with a bell, and at certain stations announces the death of the person with the name and his late place of abode. The bell is also tinkled before the funeral procession.

Some of my readers may not be aware of the derivation of the word "funeral." The term is a thoroughly ancient one, dating from heathen times. Pellicia in his "Polity of the Christian Church"¹ tells us that among the Romans the custom of carrying lighted torches at a funeral was so very ancient that the word *funus*, "funeral," was itself derived from the *funales*, a species of torch which was in those old days carried in the funeral processions. Artificial lights were necessary, as these ceremonies always took place at night.

But Pellicia with all his erudition—perhaps because of it—does not go to the root of the matter, and explain that the torches which were used at these functions in the dark, were pieces of rope dipped in tar. It is, therefore, from the Latin word, *funis* (a rope), that the word "funeral" is derived.

There is a curious idea lingering in some places that, when the death of a person is imminent, the fastening of the doors of the room or house hinders painfully the departure of the soul from the body. A few instances of this may be worth noting.

A gentleman, writing forty years ago, stated that, when he was a curate in Exeter, he called upon a parishioner who was on his deathbed. The wife told him that she thought her husband would have died during the previous night, and that, consequently, she had unfastened every lock in the house.²

In a letter to *Notes and Queries*, March 30, 1850, C. B.

¹ Bellett's translation, p. 558.

² *Notes and Queries*, March 16, 1850.

says that in West Gloucestershire the people are accustomed to throw open the windows at the moment of death.

Readers of the "Waverley Novels" will perhaps remember that Sir Walter Scott, in "Guy Mannering," remarks that it was held as certain, by the old people of Scotland, that the protracted struggle between life and death was painfully prolonged by keeping shut the door of the room in which the dying person lay.¹

The idea which we are considering prevails, or did formerly prevail, in the north as well as in the west and south-west of England. In partial connection with this custom, it is interesting to note that the Jews at Gibraltar, on a death occurring at any house, pour away all the water contained therein on the supposition that the Angel of Death may have washed his sword in it.²

I have heard that, on the occasion of a death of a member of a certain Jewish family in London some time back, all the water in the house was run off. This may be a common custom among the Jews here in England, but I have no means of verifying it.

Here is a curious custom connected with death which, although I am writing about English usages, may perhaps be worth mentioning. When a child is dying, the people in some parts of Holland are accustomed to shade it by the curtains from the parents' gaze, the soul being supposed to linger in the body so long as a compassionate eye was fixed upon it.³ Thus, in Germany, he who sheds a tear in leaning over an expiring friend, and does not wipe it off, enhances, they consider, the difficulties of death's last struggle. I believe that the same notion is introduced in the once popular story, "Mary Barton: a Tale of Manchester Life."

In connection with this part of my subject, I may remark

¹ Chapter xxvii., and note.

² *Notes and Queries*, May 18, 1850.

³ *Ibid.*, Oct. 26, 1850.

that not a few medical men of wide experience entertain a strong conviction that the departure of the soul from the body is a much more protracted operation than is commonly supposed ; and some, I know, are of opinion that the mental faculties of the patient, under ordinary circumstances, become keener as the end approaches. It is quite possible that this may be the case, and such possibility should always be remembered by those who are in attendance upon the dying, so that silence may be maintained for some few minutes at least, and outward expressions of sorrow kept in check, even when the spirit has apparently taken flight. Of course I do not mean by this that any prayers that are being said at the moment of the seeming departure should cease—far from it. The very fact of the devotions being continued may, for all we know, be of unspeakable comfort to the departing soul.

There is a curious notion in some parts of the country that a funeral procession must necessarily go “the way of the sun.” This, of course, is a remnant of Baal worship, about which I shall speak when dealing later on with heathen survivals. A gentleman, writing from Worksop, tells us that in his neighbourhood it is considered very bad luck if, when a body is taken to be buried, the funeral procession goes to the churchyard by the way which will make the party meet the sun in its course. They call this “going the back way,” and there are people who would do almost anything at a funeral rather than not follow the sun. In his “Folklore of the Northern Counties,” Mr. Henderson mentions this custom.¹

Let us now inquire as to the question of burial fees. I have met with one or two curious facts in relation to them.

A paragraph in the *Chester Courant* of September 26th, 1863, refers to a custom which is probably peculiar to some parts of Wales. An old man was charged at the Denbigh

¹ P. 61.

Police Court with having stolen three shillings from the communion table of the Parish Church, such money being the offertory made at the burial of a deceased parishioner. He confessed the theft, and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

Mr. Alex. D. H. Leadham, F.S.A., of Boroughbridge, has written to me to say that some five and twenty years ago he was on a visit to the then curate of a parish near St. Asaph, North Wales. One day there was a funeral there which he attended. The service, wholly in Welsh, proceeded to the end of the lesson in the ordinary way. Then the minister left the reading-desk, and instead of proceeding to the grave, walked up to the altar, and read there the two prayers which succeed the Lord's Prayer in the burial office, and then he opened a box fixed to the altar rail. Each mourner present left his seat, walked to the box, and deposited in it some coin according to his means. The remainder of the service was carried on at the grave side. The curate told my informant that this custom of offering money was very ancient in that church, and was supposed to be a relic of the Roman doctrine of Purgatory. There are no other burial fees in this parish save gratuities to the clerk and sexton. After the service was over the men mourners were each provided with a shovel, filled up the grave, replaced the stone, and then joined the female mourners, who had stood on one side while the grave was being closed.

In many parishes in Wales, the clergyman receives no burial fees, and the persons present lay their voluntary offerings on the altar. As these have been regularly entered in the Parish Registers they form some guide as to the esteem in which the several persons buried were held by their neighbours. For instance, no less than 19s. 6d. was contributed at the funeral of Mrs. Mary Hughes, who died at Aber in 1741; and the rector there has stated that

he once counted 85 sixpenny pieces on such an occasion. On the other hand, one Martha Jones, of the same place, was probably not popular with her neighbours, for a solitary penny was all that the parson received for his services.¹

The burial offerings, however, were not always the perquisites of the clergyman, for in some places they used to go, in case of poverty, to the family of the deceased. Attendance at a Welsh funeral is voluntary, and not by invitation only. Everybody is supposed to put something in the plate, and thus a nice little sum is sometimes handed to the survivors.²

In his "Ecclesiastical Law," the late Sir Robert Phillimore states that in early times all fees for burial were forbidden as simoniacal. Then free offerings came to be made, and in the last stage custom introduced a regular fee.³

At the beginning of the century it was the custom in some parishes in Wales for the sexton to collect the offerings on his spade at the grave side.

It is only now and then that we hear of gifts to the poor being distributed on the occasion of a funeral. One or two instances may be cited.

The *Leeds Mercury* gave the following account of what took place at the funeral of Lady William Gordon, October 16, 1841:—"Her ladyship, with her accustomed liberality, had by her will directed that her executors should distribute to the poor at Temple Newsam and the neighbourhood the sum of a thousand pounds upon the occasion of her interment. This was done as soon as the ceremonial was completed and the family had retired. A committee, consisting of the Rev. A. Martineau, Vicar of Whitkirk, Mr. Leather, Messrs. Clarke, and several of the principal in-

¹ *Notes and Queries*, April 9, 1864.

² *Ibid.*, May 7, 1864.

³ Vol. i., p. 840.

habitants, had previously met on several occasions to consider the mode of distributing the fund so as to insure its falling among those who were most needy and deserving. It was divided into sums varying from £1 to £10, according to the family, respectable conduct, and other circumstances of the object contemplated, the whole being distributed in gold."

I do not know that there is any very striking liberality in giving away money after one is dead and cannot use it oneself; but it is at least better than having it buried with one, as has been done. Thus, about the middle of last century, an old grave was opened at Wilmington, near Dartford, and a number of coins of Henry IV.'s reign were discovered within.¹

The following account of a lady's charitable bequest I like better than the one given above. Mrs. Mary Harries, *née* Lysons, widow, left a sum of money to the parish of Hemsted, Gloucester, to apprentice boys, and to provide a certain number of poor women with cloaks. She further stipulated that on the anniversary of her death (June 27), there should be full morning service with sermon and Holy Communion. The rector tells me that a guinea is paid from the "Harries charity" to the officiating clergyman for this duty, and also a fee to the clerk.

A bequest of quite a different type is recorded in *Tit-Bits* of April 28, 1888. It appears that Mr. Thomas Take, of Wath, near Rotherham, dying in 1810, bequeathed a penny to every child who should be present at his funeral. As a result the churchyard walks were literally lined with children to the number of 600 or 700, and their pennies were duly distributed to them there.

He also bequeathed a shilling to every poor woman in Wath, whilst to his own daughter he only bequeathed the miserable pittance of four guineas per annum. To an old

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1747), p. 265.

woman who had nursed him and attended to his every want for eleven years, he bequeathed the not very munificent sum of one guinea, for, as the will expressed it, "tucking me up in bed."

He also ordered forty dozen penny buns to be thrown from the church tower at noon on Christmas-day for ever, leaving a sum of money for the purpose. For some years the buns were distributed in accordance with the will; but eventually, owing to the conduct of the crowd which annually assembled, only six dozen were thrown from the tower, the remainder being quietly given away below.

There are some very curious ideas lingering in certain localities as to the times when deaths occur, and how they affect the future. Thus, for example, at Stanway in Gloucestershire it is believed that if a burial occurs on New Year's Day it will be followed by one in each month of the year. The population of the parish is under three hundred, and the usual average of deaths is six a year.

The Rev. Francis R. Traill, who sends me the above information, adds, that if a corpse lies unburied over a Sunday, the people feel sure that there will be another death in the parish within a month. In the northern counties a similar notion prevails amongst some of the country people. Their idea is, that if a funeral takes place on a Sunday, especially if on that day the grave should have been opened, three persons will be interred within a very short space of time.

This, perhaps, will be as good a place as any for recording a very remarkable custom which prevailed up to the seventeenth century. There was in one of the villages adjoining the Welsh border, an old man called the "Sin Eater," and his office was, for a trifling consideration, to pawn his own soul for the ease and rest of the soul departed. When a person died, notice was given to him, and he at once went to the house of the deceased. A cricket,

i.e. a stool, was brought, and he sat down in front of the door. A groat, a crust of bread, and a full bowl of ale, were given to him, after which he rose and pronounced the ease and rest of the soul departed, for which he would pawn his own soul. It was believed that this ceremony would free the departed soul from "walking" thenceforth. It is probable that this strange custom was originally connected in some way with the ceremony of the Scape Goat under the Law (Lev. xvi., 21). I believe that the institution of the Sin Eater was, in later times, mainly confined to the county of Hereford, but there is reason to believe that it once prevailed generally in Wales.

In olden time, very queer things were sometimes put in graves. Thus I find that in digging the grave of one Mr. William Clements, in Nockhold Churchyard, in Kent, there were found, deep in the earth, several rolls of brimstone. What this could mean I am not able to guess, but there is, at least, a very disagreeable suggestiveness about it. Equally difficult of explanation were the objects which were discovered in 1727, in the grave of a reputed hermit near Hatfield in Yorkshire. These were, a peck of hempseed and a piece of beaten copper. In the early part of this century, the church of Old Swinford in Worcestershire had to be removed, which involved the disturbance of certain of the coffins in the churchyard. In one of these the body of a lady was found, fully dressed in ancient costume, and an enormous number of pins were in her dress and lying strewed about.¹

I have found the following item in so many antiquarian records, that I fancy it must be pretty generally known to those who are interested in such matters. About the middle of the last century, when the churchyard at Clerkenwell had to be disturbed, a coffin was discovered, in

¹*Gentleman's Magazine* (1834), p. 592.

which was found an hour-glass. The meaning of this is obvious enough. It was supposed, at the time of its disinterment, that the coffin had not been in the ground more than a hundred years. The first notice of this that I have met with is in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.¹

Dr. Doran, in his book, "Saints and Sinners,"² tells us that the famous medical knight, Sir William Brown, who died in Queen Square, Westminster, had, in accordance with the provision of his will, his pocket Elzevir "Horace" placed in his coffin and buried with him, as having been "the pleasant and useful companion of my way and life."

Here is a curious example of what we are considering. Not so many years ago, on the occasion of a child's funeral in Hertfordshire, a Bible, a key, and a glass were placed within the coffin.³

I may, perhaps, be excused for mentioning a personal experience akin to this. When assistant curate at St. Mary Magdalene's, Munster Square, I attended, ministerially, a poor young girl during her last illness. In view of her death, she asked her mother to put into her coffin some of the trifles to which she was attached, such as her work-box, etc. One of the things was my photograph, which she had once begged of me. When I gave it to the child I certainly had no idea that I was destined to be buried prematurely. It is more than thirty years since this occurred.

While writing the above paragraph, I happened to mention its contents to my housekeeper, who entered the room, and she at once said that she remembered a man who used to get his living in the neighbourhood of Alton, Hants, by playing the fiddle at village frolics. When death approached, he made a request that his violin might

¹ 1746, p. 640.

² Vol. i., p. 261.

³ *Notes and Queries*, Oct. 13, 1877.

be buried with him, which was, I believe, done. There is a romantic story in the early part of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft's memoirs, in which an early admirer of the lady had asked her for a broken necklace of imitation pearls, which she had worn when he first saw her on the stage, and which, at his request, was put in his coffin.

Everybody knows, that according to the rule of the English Church, children who die unbaptised, are disqualified for ordinary Christian burial. The late Canon Humble has left on record his experiences as to how such burials were managed in his early days. He says:—"When I was curate at Newburn in Northumberland the custom was to bring the coffin of an unbaptised babe with that of a full-grown person. The child's coffin was always laid on the other coffin towards the feet, and so rested while the service was being said. There was generally a receptacle for it in the grave towards the feet, made by widening the grave at that point." I imagine that this custom was a very general one.

A rather curious usage has been reported to me by a lady, writing from Swansea. She says that at St. John's Priory Church, Brecknock, when a funeral took place on a Sunday the coffin was brought to church immediately before the Second Lesson, the clergyman meeting it at the door, and reading the sentences as he returned up the church. It was then placed on a bier in front of the reading-desk until the end of the evening service, the lesson in the Burial Service being substituted for the appointed Second Lesson. I have been told that the same custom was in olden times followed in the church at Shoreham in Sussex.

Here is an odd request made by a dying woman. A lady at Clifton has been good enough to send me a copy of a memorandum on the fly-leaf of a funeral sermon preached

on May 3, 1840, at Tidcombe, Wilts, by her father, the Rev. Robert Cole, at that time incumbent of the parish. The words ran thus:—"This sermon now is only of use in the event of an occasion similar to that upon which it was made. The occasion alluded to was this:—A request made to me by Mary Wheeler, a single woman, aged 70, who was a native of Tidcombe, and a noted person for her devotedness to the Church, and to everything thereto pertaining. She desired to be dressed and put into her coffin, having on the same 'white robe' that she was accustomed to wear in church all her life, and especially at Holy Communion."

It is well-known that formerly there was a law in England which ordered that all persons should be buried in woollen. The Acts of Parliament, 30 Car. II. cap. 3, and 32, cap. 1, relate to this. An infringement of this law entailed upon the offender a penalty of £5, and an affidavit was required in each case of burial to show that the law had been carried out. There is an item in the churchwardens' accounts in the parish of Prestwick, Manchester, in 1861, to this effect:—"Received a fine of James Crompton ffor buringe his son, and not bringinge an affidavitte according to the Acte for burying in woollin. 02. 10. 00."¹ In the churchwarden's accounts under date March 28, 1811, show an entry:—"Received a moiety of the penalty of Mr. Christie being buried in linen. £2. 10. 0."

The law was very unpopular, as is evident from Pope's lines in one of his "Moral Essays,"² where he represents Nance Oldfield the actress, under the name of Narcissa, as saying:—

¹ *Notes and Queries*, June 5, 1852.

² Essay i., line 246.

“ Odious, in woollen, ’twould a saint provoke,
 Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke.
 No, let a charming chintz or Brussels lace
 Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face.
 One would not, sure, be frightful when one’s dead,
 And, Betty, give this cheek a little red.”

The statute was repealed by 54 George III., c. 108.

The law was sometimes evaded in an ingenious way. Mr. J. E. Bayley, of Stratford, near Manchester, has stated that during the time that the Act was in force, corpses were sometimes covered simply with hay or flowers, a notification of which is sometimes found in parish registers. He adds:—“The materials are hereabouts called ‘strewings.’ I find in the register of an adjoining parish:—‘Buried in sweet flowers only.’”¹

In other cases it is said that the bodies were not wound or buried, saving only in sweet flowers and hay. Affidavits were made to that effect.

There was a custom among fashionable people in the last century to have funerals at night and by torch-light. In the list of fees in the parish of St. John’s, Westminster, we find that an extra charge of five shillings was prescribed for all interments taking place at night. It was then usual for the body to lie in state surrounded with wax candles. Mr. J. E. Smith, in his history of St. John the Evangelist, Westminster, tells us that torch-light funerals to which Pope refers in the lines—

“ When Hopkins dies, a thousand lights attend
 The wretch who living saved a candle’s end,”

were continued at St. John’s till late in the last century. As many as thirty men were employed to assist at one of these dismal pomps, and more than half a hundredweight

¹ *Notes and Queries*, August 19, 1876.

of wax candles, which then cost three shillings a pound, were used in one procession. It was also considered a breach of decorum for any mourner to appear at a funeral without a sprig of rosemary. As to pauper funerals, the vestry ordered that a cloth pall, not velvet, should be used, and that it should bear upon it the words, "Buried at the expence of the parish." This stigma, says Mr. Smith, was removed in 1807.

As regards the question of coffins, no doubt Mr. Seymour Haden has rendered a public service by introducing the use of quickly perishing wicker coffins, in place of heavy and costly wooden ones, which are long in going to decay. And this chiefly from sanitary considerations in view of our rapidly increasing population and our crowded graveyards. But surely a simpler plan would be to go back to our old English fashion of burying our departed friends in a winding-sheet as was formerly the custom, and, I may add, is still the custom when a burial takes place at sea. Certain items appear in the overseer's books of the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, relating to what must have been uncoffined burials. Thus:—

"1562. Item—for the chardge of a winding-sheete for a poure woman which died in Thambre [The Ambry], xiid.

"Item—for bringing of straw from Mr. Worleyes for the deceased girle aforesaid, for making cleane of the house, for her winding-sheete, and burieing of her, xvd.

"1566. For a winding-sheete, and for the burial of a poure olde man dieing in the street, ijs. vid."

In the "Table of Dutyes," in Shoreditch Church, dated Dec. 11th, 1664, the following items occur:—

"For a buryall in ye new churchyard without a coffin, £00 00 08.

"For a buryall in ye old churchyard without a coffin, sevenpence. . . . CO 00 07.

"For the grave making and attendance of the vicar and clerke on the enterment of a corps uncoffined, the churchwardens to pay the ordinary duteys (and no more) of this table."

The Rev. J. Deans, Melbourne, Derbyshire, states that in the register books of his parish, which date back to 1663, is an item to the effect that Ann Dolman was buried in a coffin, and that four others were also buried in coffins up to March 11th following, making five out of the whole seventeen buried in that year. The custom of using coffins for others than wealthy people appears to have begun about this time, but not to have made much progress, for, in 1698, there is only one burial in a coffin mentioned out of seventeen funerals, and none at all in 1699 out of ten. From this time, however, the number of coffins increased, so that in 1714 there were only two burials without coffins out of thirteen interments. In 1718, the vicar, who had been very careful in keeping the registers, died. Of the last eight entries of burials by him, two were without coffins, the last being dated Sept. 21st, 1718.

Persons of position were sometimes in those days buried like poorer folk. Thus in the case of the interment of Sir Robert and Lady Harding no exception appears to have been made.¹

J. H. M. (presumably J. H. Markland) states that George Psalmanazer, the notorious literary forger, who died in 1753, earnestly requested that his body should not be inclosed in any kind of coffin, but be decently laid in a shell without a lid or other covering. The writer also says that amongst the memorials of a distinguished West of England family the following occurs:—"April 30, 1701, died Sir

¹ *Reliquary*, vol. i., p. 19. (July, 1860.)

N—— L——, at his house in H——, and was buried in the outer chancel of the said church on the 3rd of May, at 12 of the clock at night, without a coffin, according to his own directions. He was then in his 88th year.”¹

A passage in Dean Comber’s “Companion to the Temple,” bears by inference upon the custom of uncoffined burials. He was Dean of Durham in 1691 :—“ The ancient Christians were wont to give a parting kiss of charity to the body just when it was about to be put into the grave, to declare their affection, and to evidence that he died in the unity and peace of the Church, for which still we say, ‘ Our dear brother or sister,’ which pious custom is yet observed in the Greek Church, and also in the northern parts of England by the near relations, who usually come near and kiss the deceased before he be put in the grave.”

It is possible that some may not have noticed that the Burial Service in the Book of Common Prayer is worded on the apparent supposition that no coffin is employed. The word coffin is not used ; it is always “ the corpse,” or “ the body.” Thus :—“ When they come to the grave, while the corpse is made ready to be laid into the earth,” etc. ; upon which rubric Wheatley, whose well-known book appeared in 1710, comments thus :—“ When the body is stripped of all but its grave clothes, and is just going to be put into the grave,” etc.² And again, in a subsequent rubric it is enjoined that “ earth shall be cast upon the body,” not upon the coffin.

At Easingwold in Yorkshire there is an old oaken shell which was formerly used for conveying the bodies of parishioners to the churchyard. The Rev. N. Jackson, vicar of the parish, has been good enough to send me a description of it, which, I understand, was published in *The Reliquary*, July, 1864. The shell is still preserved in the church.

¹ *Notes and Queries*, November 17, 1855.

² Chapter xii., sec. 5

"The central length is 6 ft. 7 in.; length of side from shoulder to head, 1 ft. 5 in.; width at foot, 9 in. The lid was originally fixed to the shell by three iron hinges on the right hand side of the body, one at the foot, another at the shoulders, and a third midway between the other two. It is somewhat larger than the shell itself, having overlapped the top about three quarters of an inch on the left side (where it seems to have had some fastenings which have been taken off) and at the head and foot. The lid is now split down the centre, the two parts being held together by five rough iron bands, one near the head, another near the foot, and the remaining three at nearly equal distances from them and from each other. The corners have also been protected in a similar manner. The sides are 9 in. in height, and on both of them at 7 in. from the shoulder and 30 in. from the foot are iron rings about an inch and a half in diameter. All the iron seems to have been very rough, but is now so much rusted as to leave its original condition a matter of some doubt. The coffin is of oak, very black with age, much decayed, and the wood exceedingly thin. It apparently stood on four legs, there being four circular holes in the bottom—one at the head, one at the foot, and two across the centre, and in the bottom one a very small part of the leg remains, it having probably been broken off, while the rest were knocked out."

On the same authority I learn that no living person remembers the shell being used, but there is a tradition that the last time it was employed was for a vagrant found dead and corrupting by the road side.

A public coffin was formerly kept for use at Youghal, County Cork. It was stored in a recessed aperture in one of the old town walls which inclose the cemetery.¹

And while speaking of coffins provided for the use of poor folk, I may mention, in passing, that a Roman Catholic

¹ *Reliquary*, July, 1864.

clergyman at a recent public meeting in Dublin stated that fifty or sixty years ago, if the poor Irish could not afford a coffin it was not uncommon for the family to place the corpse in front of the house, with a pewter plate on the breast to receive donations of passers-by. I took this item from a report of the meeting in some newspaper, but I regret to say that I neglected to append a reference at the time, and I quite forget the source of my information.

A curious fact, bearing upon the part of our subject above dealt with, appears in the *Journal of the Archæological Association*.¹ The Rev. J. T. Williams describes a number of old interments inside the church of Penmynydd, Anglesea. The bodies were close to the surface, with here and there a thin layer of lime over the body. There was no trace of a coffin, but with each body was a round white stone about the size of a moderate potato, and at the south end of the chancel arch was buried a heap of the same kind of stones. Mr. Williams suggests that this may refer to Rev. ii. 17, which runs thus:—"To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

In olden days the bodies of deceased persons were sometimes buried in an erect position. Thus in the north transept of Stanton Harcourt Church, Oxfordshire, is the burial-place of the Harcourt family. Tradition relates that Sir John Harcourt, who died in 1330, was buried here in a standing posture. In the pavement above is a circular stone in which is inlaid a shield of brass bearing the family arms.²

At the close of the last century one Job. Orton, an inn-keeper, left instructions that he should be buried in an

¹ Vol. xvi., p. 325.

² *Notes and Queries*, No. 194, 1853.

erect posture, and it is said that his wishes were complied with. The man's motive was the hope that he would rise before his wife, who was interred in the ordinary fashion.¹

Ben Jonson was so buried in Westminster Abbey, the supposition being that this was to avoid the large fee demanded for a full-sized grave. For a long time it was supposed that the story was invented to account for the smallness of the gravestone. The grave, however, was opened some fifty years ago, and the dramatist's remains were discovered in the attitude indicated by tradition.²

In the first canto of "The White Doe of Rylstone," Wordsworth refers to erect burials thus:—

“ Pass, pass, who will, yon chantry door,
And through the chink in the fractured floor,
Look down, and see a grisly sight,
A vault where the bodies are buried upright ;
There face to face, or hand to hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand.”

This relates to a tradition respecting the vault of the Claphams at the east end of the north aisle of Bolton Priory Church.

Akin to this, it may be noted that when Charlemagne's tomb at Aix-la-Chapelle was opened by the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, in 1165, he is said to have found the body not reclining in his coffin, but seated on a throne as one alive, clothed in imperial robes, bearing his sceptre in his hand, and on his knees a copy of the Gospels.

About the strangest kind of burial that I have come across in my researches is one chronicled in the register of Lymington Church, Hants, where the following appears under the year 1736:—

¹ *Notes and Queries*, No. 194, 1853.

² *Ibid.*, No. 110, 1853.

"Samuel Baldwin, Esquire, sojourner in this parish, was immersed without the needles, *sans cérémonie*, May, 20." ¹

It seems that shortly before his death Mr. Baldwin intimated his desire to be buried at sea, in order to disappoint the frequently expressed intention of his wife, that if she survived him she would, out of contempt for him, dance on his grave. There is a delicate vein of humorous irony conveyed in the husband's dying request, which, I should think, had rarely been equalled on such an occasion.

Tradition says that Mr. Charles Byrne, the famous Irish giant, who died towards the close of the last century, urgently requested that he might be buried at sea in order to escape the hands of the surgeons. This, however, was not done, for his skeleton, measuring seven feet eight inches, is now in the Museum of the College of Surgeons. It is said that William Hunter purchased the body, giving £500 for it.

The desire of some to be buried at sea rather than in the earth is not without examples in our own day. Thus I find that²:—

"Miss Hewitt, head mistress of the Girls' High School at Napier, New Zealand, was recently taken out in a steamer several miles to sea and buried at night there. She had left this in her will as an alternative to cremation, fearing that there might be no means for the latter, and being averse to burial in the earth."

There have been, and I believe still are, some odd ideas as to the position in the churchyard in which people like to be buried. The popular idea is well illustrated by what a lady tells me is the usage at Morchard Bishop in North

¹ "Hone's Table Book," col. 413.

² *Tit-Bits*, July 23, 1892.

Devon. She says that there was, and perhaps is, a popular prejudice against burial on the north side of the church, and that the graves of strangers are usually situated there.

It has been suggested that the reason why the south side of the churchyard was preferred was—(1) because the churchyard cross was always placed there; (2) because it was the sunny side; and (3) because the south door was generally the principal entrance, and consequently the tombs were more in the sight of relatives and friends.¹ This explanation must be taken just for what it is worth.

More valuable, albeit more fanciful to most minds, is the opinion of that very able and thoughtful man, the late Rev. R. S. Hawker, vicar of Morwenston, Devonshire, who says, "The doctrine of regions was coeval with the death of our Lord. The east was the realm of the oracles, the especial throne of God. The west was the domain of the people; the Galilee of all nations was there. The south, the land of mid-day, was sacred to things heavenly and divine. The north was the devoted region of Satan and his hosts, the lair of demons and their haunts." In some of our ancient churches, over against the font, and in the northern wall, there is a devil's door. It was thrown open at every baptism for the escape of the fiend, and at all other seasons carefully closed. Hence came the old dislike to sepulture at the north.²

Milton, in the sixth book of "Paradise Lost," appears to allude to the same idea as to the evil character of the northern aspect. Thus:—

" At last

Far in the horizon to the north appeared,
From skirt to skirt, a fiery region stretched
In battailous aspect, and nearer view
Bristled with upright beams innumerable

¹ *Notes and Queries*, August 17, 1850.

² *Ibid.*, September 14, 1850.

Of rigid spears, and helmets throng'd, and shields
 Various, with boastful argument portray'd,
 And banded powers of Satan hasting on
 With furious expedition, for they ween'd
 That selfsame day, by fight, or by surprise,
 To win the mount of God."

Everybody knows that graves are ordinarily dug facing in their length east and west. Exceptions, however, may be found. For example, Mr. James R. Scott, F.S.A., states that in some country churchyards, as at Cowden in Kent, and East and West Bergholt in Suffolk, there are graves that face north and south, and he suggests that they are those of suicides.¹ My friend, Mr. J. T. Mickelthwaite, F.S.A., remarks that they are more probably the graves in which Dissenters have been buried. This, I think, is probable enough, as Dissenters are commoner than suicides.

But as regards the burial of suicides, until 1823 the body of the self-murderer was directed to be buried in a cross road, with a stake driven through his body. It is, however, the way in which their graves were formerly treated that we have now more especially to consider. As to this point I may give a quotation from a curious letter from the Rev. Mr. Watkins to Dr. Lyttleton, formerly Bishop of Carlisle, which is given by a correspondent to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The letter is dated from Gethly, May 14, 1763, and the passage runs thus:—"We have here a custom to this day for every passenger to throw a stone over the grave of such wretches as are buried in the cross roads, with the following curse, 'Yn Garn y bo ti,' i.e. 'May such villains be buried under a heap of stones;' 'Garn' in the British signifying 'a heap of stones.' These heaps are very common, and are looked upon as the highest marks of infamy. The custom is very ancient. We read in 2 Samuel xviii. 17, 'And they took

¹ *Notes and Queries*, March 13, 1880.

Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him.' ”

Dr. Patrick's comment on this verse quotes Andricomius' description of the Holy Land, where he says that travellers as they went by this heap of stones were wont to throw a stone to add to the heap, in detestation of their rebellion.

One of the most horrid curses among the Welsh to this day is “Yn Garn y bo ti.”¹

There are some very curious notes upon funerals as they were “conducted” in the sixteenth century, in Henry Machyn's diary, the original of which is in the British Museum. I have already quoted from this MS., and it seems right to account for the gaps in my extracts. The fact is that this MS. was one of the volumes which suffered in the fire which occurred years ago in the Cottonian Library at the Museum. Fortunately the edges only were burnt, and very little important matter was destroyed. The words or letters in brackets are conjectural insertions by Mr. John Gough Nichols, F.S.A., who superintended the reprint of the volume for the Camden Society in 1848. The period over which the diary ranges is from 1550 to 1563, which of course includes part of Edward VI.'s reign, the whole of Mary's, and part of Elizabeth's.

In Machyn's days the Lord Mayors of London seem to have been somewhat greater people than they are now, if one may judge from the pomp with which funerals of members of their family were conducted. Here is an account of a funeral of a lady mayoress in 1550 :—

“The xix day of November was bured my lady Jude, Ma[yress] of London, and wyffe of Sir Andrew Jude, Mayr of London, and burred in the parryche of Saint Ellen in Bysshope Gatt Stret, for he gayff mony gownes, and to the powre men and women ij c gownes of mantyll . . . and

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1773), pp. 179, 180.

the Clarkes of London had the berying of my lade, and then came . . . with ij harolds afore with iiij baners abowt her borne, and after my [Lord] Mayre and ys bredurne, and alle the stret, and the chyrche wher hangyd with blake, and with schochyons of thir armes, and a gret dolle, and a gret [dinner].”

As to the ceremonial at the funerals of people of “quality,” there does not seem to have been any great difference between the usage under Edward VI. and his elder sister Mary, when, upon her brother’s death, she came to the throne. Machyn records the funeral of Bishop Gardiner in the following words:—

“The xiiij of November be-gane the knyll for the most ryght reverent Father in God, my lord chaunseler of England, doctor Sthevyn Gardiner, byshope of Wynchastur, and of the prevy consell with Kyng Henry the viiith, and unto Quen Mare, Quen of England; and with a hersee of iiij branchys, with gylt candyllstykes; and ij whytt branchys, and iij dosen of stayffes-torchys, and all the qwyre hangyd with blake and armes, and a durge songe; and the morow masse of requiem and doctur Whyt, bysshope of Lynkolne dyd pryche at the sam masse; and after all they whent to his plasse to diner.”

Take next the account of the burial of an ordinary London citizen in Machyn’s days; this time during the reign of Elizabeth:—

“The xxiv day of Aprell (1560) was bered at Sant Mary Mayd: Master Hansley, a grocer, and he had a dossen of skochyons of arms, and there was the masturs of the Compane of the Grocers, and prestes and clarkes synging, Master Juelle, the byshope of Salbere (Salisbury) dyd pryche

and he gayff——gownes unto pore men ; and there was at this berehyng all the masters of (the) hospitille with ther gren stayffes in ther handes.”

I find that at and after this period, when any member of one of the city companies died, it was the custom for a large number of his brethren to follow his body to the grave.

A few notes as to the ceremonies with which royal personages and the nobility were buried in the last century may be interesting. We are told that the body of the Queen of George II. was buried at Westminster Abbey on the night of December 17, 1737. At the door of the church the body was met by the dean and prebendaries, with the masters, scholars, and choir belonging to the same, and the choir of the Chapel Royal attending in their proper habits, with wax tapers in their hands, and the dean and prebendaries in their copes.¹

At the funeral of Frederick, Prince of Wales, at Westminster Abbey, April 13, 1751, the body was met at the church door by the dean and prebendaries, attended by the gentlemen of the choir and the King's scholars, who fell into the procession immediately after the officer of arms, with wax tapers in their hands, and properly habited, and began the proper burial service (no anthem being composed for the occasion). Two drums beat a dead march during the service.²

The use of copes, and of tapers carried in procession, presumably lighted, seems to have been general at grand funerals in the last century. These things would, I imagine, be regarded as an extreme “ritualistic” novelty now.

At the funeral of George II. in the Abbey, the corpse, we are told, was received at the entrance of the church by

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, December, 1737.

² *Ibid.*, (1755), p. 184.

the dean and prebendaries in their copes, attended by the choir, all having wax tapers in their hands.¹

The higher orders of the nobility seem to have had rather grand funerals in the earlier part of the last century. Here is an instance.

When John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, was buried in January, 1736, the body was carried in an open chariot, the effigies in armour lying on the coffin, and two of his grace's officers of the bedchamber sitting at the head and feet, in close mourning, bareheaded. The procession was received at Westminster Abbey by the dean and chapter in their copes, and the whole choir in their surplices, singing before the corpse.²

In the course of my investigations I have not come upon much matter bearing upon the use of funeral palls in olden times, save incidentally. That they were used is evident, but I am not in a position to say to what extent they were employed. I find, however, that in the middle of the last century the "Poer's Pall" at Weston Flavel in the diocese of Peterborough is spoken of as if it were an ordinary church ornament.³

There is one item in the ceremonial prescribed by the rubric in the Book of Common Prayer which has already been referred to on page 148, concerning which I think it well to say something. I mean the order for earth to be cast upon the body when the words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes," etc., are recited, after the corpse has been lowered into the grave. I learn that at Winwick in South Lancashire everyone who assists at the funeral, even quite little children, join in doing this, and the custom seems to be a thoroughly religious one, which should be preserved where it is practised.

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 17, 1760.

² *Ibid.*, (1736), p. 54.

³ *Ibid.*, (1760), p. 380.

And this is a suitable place for recording an excellent usage which the Rev. C. E. Bowden of Edinburgh notifies to me, and which I wish was everywhere followed in places south of the Tweed. He says, "that in Scotland it is the custom for the mourners to wait at the grave side until it is filled up. Then they and the grave-diggers raise their hats and leave."

It has always struck me as more than a mistake for the relatives and friends of a deceased person to leave the filling up of the grave to mere hireling labourers, who, as likely as not, are surrounded by a lot of thoughtless and irreverent boys, and all sorts of abominations may go on. Some friend of the family at least ought to stop by the grave and to see that decency is observed.

By the way, there is an Irish custom in connection with funerals which is worth notice, and this seems a suitable place at which to introduce it. The Rector of Waterville, County Kerry, states "that it is the custom amongst his Protestant parishioners, when a coffin is about to be placed in the grave, to draw out all the nails which secure the lid, and which are only partially driven in. The convenience of the deceased at the day of the Resurrection is given as a reason."¹

Perhaps I ought to have spoken about "wakes" before describing the ceremonies connected with the actual interment. The subject will, however, come in very well here.

When we speak of "wakes" nowadays, we generally consider that they apply only to Ireland and the Irish. Few probably know what the custom signifies.

I believe I am right in saying that the idea of "waking" or "watching" by the side of a body originated in days when medical science was undeveloped, and was intended

¹ *Notes and Queries*, Feb. 28, 1880.

to test whether the person watched were really dead or only in a swoon. In course of time this praiseworthy custom degenerated, and the watch or wake was used as an occasion of festivity. In Hazlitt's edition of Brand's "Popular Antiquities" we have the following:—

Pennant, in describing Highland ceremonies, says:—"The late wake is a ceremony used at funerals. The evening after the death of any person, the relations and friends of the deceased meet at the house attended by a bagpipe or fiddle. The nearest of kin, be it wife, son, or daughter, opens a melancholy ball, dancing and greeting—*i.e.* crying violently at the same time, and this continues till daylight, but with such frolics and gambols among the younger part of the company. . . . If the corpse remain unburied for two nights, the same rites are renewed."¹

In this last century a similar usage was followed in Wales; but so far as I can gather the watching was accompanied with observances somewhat more religious than those above mentioned.

I have been favoured with a printed copy of a very interesting paper which was read by the Rev. N. F. Y. Kemble at the Carlisle Diocesan Conference in 1875. It deals with funeral customs in Cumberland and Westmoreland. Instead of breaking it up and intercalating my own matter with isolated portions of it, I have thought it better to introduce it as it stands, merely omitting a paragraph here and there as unnecessary in this volume, however well suited for the occasion on which it was originally delivered. Some of the notes will be found to overlap portions of the subject already dealt with. Mr. Kemble says:—

"It was the universal, and is now the occasional practice, while the corpse remains in the house decently prepared for burial, for relations

¹ Vol. ii., p. 167.

and friends to keep watch by it during the night, having candles alight during the dark hours.

"Along the Fell sides, within the memory of the living, a funeral dole of sixpence was given to every poor person visiting the house between the death and the interment.

"Canon Porteus, to whom I am indebted for many interesting particulars and some valuable suggestions, informs me that the last dole given at Warcop was in 1812 ; but I learn that at Crosby Ravensworth the custom still holds. A dole of sixpence being occasionally given there at the grave to each poor person present.

"This custom is to be traced to Roman Catholic times, and doubtless originated with a desire to procure prayers for the dead. It is mentioned by Froude as one of the requests in Henry VIII.'s will as given for this purpose.

"Funeral cakes, costing threepence or fourpence each, consisting of two layers of paste with currants between, used very generally to be given at the house before the burial ; but this practice of sending funeral cakes, once so common, though still kept up in a few remote country districts, seems to have died out entirely in our towns and larger parishes.

"There is a custom in some places—it prevailed at Sebergham when I was incumbent there—to give to each person who attends at the house on the day of the funeral a small piece of rich cake, carefully wrapped up in white paper and sealed. This with a glass of wine or spirits used, I remember, to be carried round immediately before the lifting of the corpse. Each visitor took more or less of the wine or spirits, returning at once the glass to its place on the tray, and then selecting one of the sealed packets, carried it unopened home. I often tried to discover the meaning of this usage, but nobody seemed able to enlighten me. I believe, however, that the piece of cake, carefully hidden out of sight and sealed, was symbolical of the dead body about to be covered up and secured in the grave, and that the breaking of the seal and bringing the piece of cake to light again at some future day—which of course was expected to happen—was significant of the resurrection of the buried body.

"A curious custom may be mentioned as existing in not a few places, *viz.* that of the clerk singing by himself a hymn outside the door previous to the moving of the procession. This singing of a

hymn by the clerk as a solo in presence of the company produces too often an effect more ludicrous than edifying, and is a practice which many of us would wish to see discontinued.

“Some of us, perhaps, have felt scandalised at the retention of hats, by the mourners only, during the procession, and within the house of God, whether kneeling or sitting around the coffin, where it is usual to deposit it inside the church. I am at a loss even to conjecture the significance of this custom; but I am disposed to believe that nothing disrespectful is intended by it. Setting it down to inadvertence or irreverence, I once declined to proceed with the service until all hats were removed, and after a moment's hesitation this was done, and when my wishes were understood, the practice was not persisted in. I can see no object in retaining a fashion of this kind, which, from one point of view, is objectionable, because unscriptural, and from no point of view defensible.

“It cannot, I think, be denied that there exists amongst us a strong feeling of respect for the dead, as evidenced, amongst other signs, by the pains commonly bestowed in making everything pretty and seemly inside the coffin, and by the strewment of flowers and evergreens upon the corpse—an Anglo-Saxon custom—to render as pleasing as possible the last sight and remembrance of the dead, the coffin lid being always left open, until the moment of ‘lifting,’ for a last fond look from relatives and friends.

“As regards the solemn ceremony of ‘lifting,’ the usage varies in different parishes. In some the manner is to lift the corpse in front of the house, in the middle of the road. Sometimes the coffin is deposited outside the front door on two chairs during the first, or the first and second verses of a hymn, the remainder being sung by the mourners and friends as they move on towards the place of burial; and in some parishes, on depositing the burden at the church gate, another hymn is sung, and a third after the reading of the lesson previous to carrying the body out of the sacred building to the grave side. But the practice of singing hymns at funerals, though a very ancient and laudable one, is gradually dying out. It still holds in some places where there is a regular choir attached to the parish church, at the burial of one of their brotherhood, or of any person well known to them.

“There are customs, as has been already intimated, of very restricted observance.

“For instance, at Bongate, Appleby, and at Penrith, a table is placed at the door, covered with a white cloth, furnished with sprigs of rosemary and box, a piece of which is taken by each guest on entering the house. The selection of box for such an occasion may be, and probably is, that it is an evergreen, and easily procurable; but the appropriateness of rosemary is obvious. Ophelia informs us that it is ‘for remembrance;’ but it has a deeper significance than this. Heathen nations, the Romans, for instance, made use of cypress at their funerals, a tree which, once cut, never revives, but dies away—fit emblem of their belief that the bodies of their dead had perished for ever. A Christian, in following a brother or sister to man’s ‘long home,’ bears in his hand a sprig of rosemary, which is always green, and which flourishes the more the more it is cut, and which, being set in the ground, will strike root immediately, and branch into a tree. By this simple, but touching figure, avouching his belief that this very body of his relative or friend which he is about to see solemnly committed to the ground, will one day rise again, and be reunited to the soul. ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life.’ Hearing that voice,

“ ‘We gladlier rest
Our darlings on earth’s quiet breast,
And our hearts feel they must not break.’

May this innocent and significant custom always be retained amongst us.

“But I turn from it to allude to one which surely even those who are ‘native here, and to the manner born,’ will be ready to admit would be more honoured in the breach than in the observance, namely, That of making proclamation in the churchyard for all friends and neighbours to resort for refreshment to certain public-houses. There is something so repulsive in this that every effort should be made to put a stop to it.

“The practice and mode of ‘bidding’ to funerals deserves a passing notice.

“In some places invitations are sent round from house to house, and in many parishes—it was so at Sebergham a few years ago—there is a

person who regularly undertakes the duty of bidding. I understand that at Penrith and Carlisle, and possibly in other places, it is not unusual to employ the bellman for this purpose. The practice is to invite all within a certain boundary to attend the house of the deceased some hours before the time fixed for lifting; and this fashion of inviting a large circle of friends to gather together early in the day furnishes opportunity for the feasting and drinking, which, as already observed, not infrequently results in excess and unpunctuality. I am told that, at Warcop, should the death occur on the south side of the beck, the south, or tower side, is invited; if on the north, or hall side, that side is summoned to attend. Also, that a commestible, called 'fiermity' or 'frumity' (Latin, *frumentum*), consisting of milk, white bread, ale, fruit, currants, etc., is made in a cheese-kettle, and served in a large milk-bowl. Each guest is provided with a spoon, and all partake in common as they will. What remains is given to children visiting the house the day after the burial.

"The passing bell, which in our country in former times used to be rung at the hour of a person's death to obtain prayers for the departing soul, is rung amongst us after the decease. The solemn event is announced by nine tolls for a man, six for a woman, and three for a child, though the numbers are variable. Then, at the conclusion of the tolling, all the bells are heard to chime forth. Here, again, we may note a custom peculiar to Warcop. The bell is tolled thrice during the day from the death until the burial, morning, noon, and night, at 8 a.m., 12 noon, and at 8 p.m.

"A practice, more singular than important, is that which prevails in certain localities of telling the bees of a death in a family, and also of turning the hive right round before the corpse is lifted. We know that many superstitions exist in connection with these wonderful insects, but not the least remarkable is that which can attribute the desertion of a hive—and such a thing has been known at Edenhall—to neglect of the attention mentioned above."

We must now pass on to another phase of the subject which we are considering. Among the many curious tombs which might be mentioned, I select one, simply as a specimen. In the "Historical Description of Wimborne

Minster," by Mr. G. Yeatman, the following passage occurs:—"Under the south-west window (of the chancel aisle) is the tomb of Anthony Ettrick, the first Recorder of Poole, and the magistrate who committed the Duke of Monmouth. He, having been offended with the inhabitants of Wimborne, made solemn protestation that he never would be buried in the church or churchyard, under the ground or over. To fulfil his design he obtained permission to cut a niche in the wall where the coffin was placed during his life, and the date on the front that he thought he would die, in 1691; but he lived till 1703. It is visible, but the date has been altered. The tomb is of black marble, on which is painted the coats of arms and pedigree of his family. The deed (which has his signature) is still preserved, conveying 20s. annually to Wimborne churchwardens to keep his tomb in repair."

A few words now as to inscriptions on tombstones. So many collections of quaint epitaphs have been published that it would be waste of space to dwell upon them here. There are, however, one or two facts to which I should wish to call attention.

Mr. F. J. Ames, the postmaster at Crondall, Hants, tells me that the following inscription appears on a gravestone at Alton in the same county:—

"Sacred to the memory of Edward Andrews. Born March 18, 1747. Died Jan., 1830."

It will be at once noticed that the above rather curious inscription, according to our modern views, was framed under the old style. According to the old system of reckoning, the year began on March 25. Hence, the seventh month was called "September," the eighth "October," and so on. When the Gregorian or new style was adopted, the year was made to begin on the first day of

January. E. Andrews was born on March 18—, *i.e.* in the last month of the year 1747, old style, or the third month of the year 1748, new style.

It is not always safe to trust to inscriptions on tombstones for historical facts. I am not thinking of the child who, in walking round a churchyard, and reading the eulogistic epitaphs about perfect husbands and devoted wives, asked her mother where all the naughty people were buried, but treating it as a purely historical question. It is noteworthy, that in Chipstead Church, Surrey, on a flat stone on the floor within the altar rails, there is the following inscription :—

“ HERE LYETH INTERRED THE
BODY OF ALCE HOOKER, ELDEST
DAUGHTER TO THE REVEREND FATHER
IN GOD, RICHARD HOOKER, DOCTOR
IN DIVINITY AND DEAN OF SARVM
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE
20TH OF DECEMBER, ANNO DOMINI 1649.”

The title given here to one who was not a bishop is curious. And further, it must be remarked that the “Judicious Hooker” was never Dean of Sarum. He was Prebendary of Netherhaven in connection with Salisbury Cathedral, and I presume, in consequence, a member of the chapter. The explanation of the error is simple enough. The fact is that Hooker was appointed Sub-Dean of Sarum in 1591. The proper title of canons is “Very Reverend,” and this the Roman Church has retained, although with ourselves it has fallen into disuse. I cannot explain the exact form of the title in the above epitaph, but any one can see that the mistake was not an altogether unnatural one. Lawyers and writers of history would do well to remember the above error.

There were some curious customs in olden times with regard to burial garlands. Thus I find in the *Gentleman's Magazine*¹ a paper in which the writer, after saying that, in the last century, maids were rewarded at their deaths with a garland or crown on their heads, adds that in the year 1733, the clerk of the parish church of Bromley in Kent, when digging a grave in the churchyard close to the east end of the chancel wall, dug up one of these crowns or garlands, which was most artistically wrought in flagree work, with gold and silver wire in resemblance of myrtle, whose leaves were fastened to hoops of larger wire of iron. The writer states that he possessed part of the wreath and lining.

Of "depository garlands," he says that their use continued within twenty or thirty miles of London until within a few years of his writing. At funerals they were carried solemnly before the corpse by two maids, and afterwards hung up in some conspicuous place within the church. His description of the garlands is the familiar one. They have either gloves cut out in paper, and inscribed with the name, or a solitary hour-glass hanging therein.

About forty years ago, he adds, these garlands grew much out of repute, and were thought by many to be unbecoming decorations for so sacred a place as a church. Many were taken down, and the hanging up of new ones forbidden in some places.

Any reader who is curious to see an illustration of some of these funeral garlands will find two very interesting wood-cuts in Chambers' "Book of Days" under February 18th, borrowed from *The Reliquary*,² where those hanging in the churches of Ashford-in-the-Water and Matlock are depicted. A detailed description of them is given, following upon a pretty quotation from Gay's poems:—

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1747), p. 264.

² Vol. i., p. 7.

“To her sweet memory flow’ry garlands strung
On her now empty seat aloft were hung.”

Writing in 1874, the late Canon Humble says:—
“Wreaths of flowers used to be carried at the funerals of young people at Wilton, and not thrown into the grave, but hung up in the church—a sort of *Disce mori* better than the motto on the Hatchment.”

He adds, as a point to be noted, as bearing upon the above remark, that they were not immortelles, but fresh flowers such as are spoken of by Wordsworth as a custom in Westmoreland.

In reply to inquiries which I made, a lady at Minsterly in Shropshire has been good enough to send me the following:—

“Concerning the garlands in Minsterly Church, I can only give you the old tradition concerning them; positive knowledge on the subject is, I believe, unattainable. They are seven in number, made of rosettes and streamers of ribbon on a foundation of wood, cane, or wire. In the centre of each are hung gloves of paper. Each one is suspended on a small stick little more than a foot in length, at the end of which is a wooden heart bearing initials and date. The latest is M. M., 1777. They are placed very high on the wall of the church. Tradition says that they are in memory of betrothed maidens, who, having lost their lovers by death in early youth, continued faithful to their first love, and led a virgin life, devoted to the memory of the departed. They commemorate not the betrothed who dies first, but the survivor who remains faithful to the love of her youth. . . . It is said that in each case the garland was made by the person whose fidelity it commemorates. I cannot say whether any of the initials represent men, but the general impression is that they are all females.”

Not so many years ago, a contributor to *Notes and Queries*¹ stated that the custom of hanging up funeral garlands for maidens deceased still existed at Abbots Ann, near Andover. He counted nearly forty of them in the church in 1873, and described them as formed of a crown of some metal with five white gloves, one in the centre, and the remainder on the circlet.

A somewhat curious usage slightly different from the above, has been described to me by Mr. Leadman, F.S.A., of Boroughbridge. He says that at Aldborough, near there, a hundred or more years ago, before the old rood screen in the church was destroyed, garlands of flowers were hung up over the entrance to the choir in memory of young maidens and bachelors, the names of the deceased being inscribed in each case.

In parts of Lancashire, a basin with sprigs of box is placed at the door from which the corpse is brought out for burial. Each person takes one, and throws it into the grave after the funeral. Box grown in gardens is there called "burying box" by cottagers.

At a funeral at Penrynnyngold, adjoining Hope in Flintshire, Mr. W. H. King tells me that he saw those present after the grave had been filled in, plucking sprigs of evergreen, and sticking them all over the grave.

A contributor to *Notes and Queries* quotes from the *Exeter Gazette* a description of a funeral, and says:—"In accordance with the usual custom, sprigs of acacia were dropped on the coffin at the conclusion of the ceremony. The newspaper correspondent appears to have omitted all explanation of the custom. The deceased was a Freemason, as, probably, were the mourners. It is by no means an uncommon usage for the members of the Masonic brotherhood to act as above described, and it is customary for them to wear a sprig of acacia in their coats.

Notes and Queries, Nov. 22, 1873.

May I venture to speculate as to the choice of this particular tree? The acacia is, I believe, the nearest English counterpart to the tree which is called the "Locust" in America. It may be remembered that William Cobbett, in his book on gardening, when speaking of the best sort of timber for fencing purposes, especially recommended "locust" to be used, for that, he says, *will last for ever*. I quote from memory, but I believe that I am substantially correct.

A lady tells me that when her father, who was a Freemason of the highest degree, was buried many years ago in Canada, he had a Masonic funeral, Masons coming from all parts of the Dominion. Masons took charge of the body, and Masons were the bearers, all wearing a sprig of green—she forgets what—for there was no acacia to be had. At the close of the service these sprigs were cast into the grave, so that the coffin was covered.

If my speculation above mentioned is correct, the sprigs in question were most likely those from either the birch or the elm, as these, if I mistake not, are the two trees which furnish the most enduring wood when subjected to moisture. Hence, perhaps, the evil practice of making coffins of elm in order to keep the body from the corrupting effects of contact with the earth for as long as possible, the very opposite to which is what all sensible people desire.

In some places the periodical dressing of graves is most carefully attended to. Thus the Vicar of Usk, Monmouthshire, has been good enough to send me the following details. He says that for some weeks before Palm Sunday, the inhabitants are busy in the churchyard scouring the gravestones, repainting the railings, beautifying the tombs, and returfing the grave mounds, the churchwardens doing all they can to set God's acre in order. Fences are repaired, walks and trees trimmed, and grass cut and cleared of

weeds. All friends of the deceased ones who are buried there, take care to get the slabs and stones set up before the great day of ancestral commemoration.

When the day arrives, early in the morning we see groups of pious survivors carrying trays and baskets of flowers, garlands, floral crosses, and other devices, which have been prepared from the few flowers to be obtained at that early season.

Some supplement them with exotics and plants carefully cherished indoors against the day. The richer people send for rare hothouse plants in large abundance from a London nursery. From early dawn the churchyard teems with a population of busy grave-dressers of all ranks and ages. When the day is fine, and no anxiety as to rain or strong wind is felt, the cheerful friendliness of this stage of the day is very pleasant and exciting.

By church time all is complete, and about half an hour before that time spectators begin to arrive, ready, most of them, for the House of God. Through the day there is a large influx of visitors, affording an opportunity for many a friendly meeting and greeting, and many a welcome reminiscence is interchanged between the relatives of the deceased persons whose graves have been adorned.

Moss baskets abound, and for some weeks before Palm Sunday the country people make and bring them into Usk, where they generally find a ready sale. Now and then a deserted desolate grave shows the entire absence of all representatives, but this is rare, as mostly some friend, out of respect for the memories of the past, is found to do the kind office, and to trim the lonely grave, or spare for it a wreath of their own.

Mr. H. S. Simpson, writing from Cheltenham, informs me that in the parish of St. Weonards, near Ross, in Herefordshire, it was in 1836 the custom to dress the graves in the churchyard with flowers on Palm Sunday.

About the year 1854 this was changed, and flowers were put on the graves on Easter Day instead of Palm Sunday, which, he adds, was called "Flowering Sunday." A lady at Swansea tells me that at Crickhowell, in South Wales, it has been the custom from time immemorial to dress not only the graves on Palm Sunday, but also to hang garlands on the monuments in the church.

CHAPTER VII.

PENANCE.

FOLLOWING the sequence of services in the Prayer Book, we now come to the Communion Office appointed to be used on Ash Wednesday, which opens with the following words :—

“Brethren, in the primitive Church there was a godly discipline that at the beginning of Lent such people as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord, and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend.”

This, therefore, is the place where the matter of penance in the English Church should come under our consideration.

It will be well for me to begin by transcribing some valuable notes respecting the legal aspect of penance, kindly supplied to me by Sir Walter G. F. Phillimore, Bart., Q.C., who writes as follows :—

“You will find much about penance in ‘Phillimore’s Ecclesiastical Law,’ pages 1367-1375. In later times two things were usually the subjects of penance—defamation of character, and incontinence, especially incest.

“As to the latter, Lord Stowell, in *Burgess v. Burgess* (‘Haggard’s Consistory Reports,’ p. 393), in 1804, speaks of the ancient *solemnis pœnitentia* before the bishop as much softened down, and then says—‘Looking at the age and infirmity of the party, and what might be the consequence of such a punishment, the Court will not think it necessary to inflict the public penance.’ The man was very old.

"In *Chick v. Ramsdale* ('1 *Curteis Ecclesiastical Reports*,' p. 35), 1835, penance for an incestuous action was directed, but upon a medical certificate of the woman's ill-health, was remitted.

"In *Woods v. Woods* ('2 *Curteis*,' p. 529), 1840, Dr. Lushington, as judge of the Consistory Court of London, said—"I think it right to say that although in some cases public penance has been directed, still, after considering the subject as carefully as I can, it has appeared to me advisable not to make that part of my sentence."

"As late as 1856, my father, sitting as Chancellor of Chichester, had the matter before him in a case of incest, and said—"I follow the example of Lord Stowell in *Burgess v. Burgess*, in not enjoining public penance to be performed by them.' (Phillimore's "*Ecclesiastical Law*," p. 1375).

"As to 'defamation,' I find in the law books a case of penance enjoined as late as 1838 (*Kington v. Hack*, 7 *Adolphus and Ellis*, *Queen's Bench Reports*, p. 708), but my idea is that there are several later. Penance in these cases has consisted in a more or less public asking of pardon.

"There is certainly no statute abolishing penance, which still remains a legal, though unusual, ecclesiastical punishment. It was last dealt with by convocation in Queen Anne's time as to monies paid for 'commutation of penance.'"

Sir Walter Phillimore adds:—"I find that fees for commutation of penance were taken in some dioceses, and stood in a regular 'table of fees' to 1832. See *Ecclesiastical Courts Commission Report*, presented to Parliament."

Akin to penance is the sentence of excommunication, concerning which Mr. Edward Peacock, F.S.A., has quoted the following extract from the register of the parish of Scotter, Lincolnshire:—

"Memorandum. That on Septuagesima Sunday, being 19th of January, 1667, one Francis Drury, an excommuni-

cate person, came into church in time of divine service in ye morning, and being admonisht by mee to begon, he obstinately refused. Whereuppon the whole congregation departed; and after the same manner in the afternoon he came againe, an refusing againe to go out the whole congregation againe went home, soe y^t little or no service was pformed. They prevented his further coming in that manner, as hee threatened, by order from the justice uppon the statute of Queene Elizabeth concerning the molestation and disturbance of publiq preachers.

“WILLIAM CARRINGTON, *Rector*.

“O tempora! O mores!”

I will now proceed to give some instances of actual penances which have been publicly carried out. In the case of recent ones I suppress on charitable grounds the names of delinquents, so as not to give pain to the survivors of those who have thus publicly suffered in years gone by.

In the archives of Exeter Cathedral the following item occurs under the heading, Transcript 1672, Southill, near Cullington, Cornwall:—

“John Taprill, clerk, asked forgiveness of Rd. Grills Carpenter, within the parish church of Southill, upon a Sunday forenoon, after morning prayer, in the month of December last past for reporting things not proven. Whereuppon the said Taprill, longing to be revenged, did sing some psalms as he thought fitting to lamentable tunes for sorrow of his disgrace.”

Henry Machyn, the diarist, did penance at St. Paul's Cross, and he notifies the fact in a very amusing manner in his manuscript, so as, if possible, to obscure the fact that it was of himself that he was speaking.

"The xxij day of November, the iiij yere [of] Quen Elesabeth, dyd pryche at Powlles Crosse Renagir, yt was Sant Clement day, dyd sy[t] alle the sermon tyme monser Henry de Machyn, for ij [words ?] the wyche was told hym, that Veron the French [man] the precher was taken with a wenche, by the rep[orting] by on Wyllyam Laurence, clarke of Sant Mare Maudle [ns] in Mylke Strette, the wyche the sam Hare Knellyd down [be] for master Veron and the byshope, and yett [they] would not for[give] hym for alle y^s fryndes that he had worshephalle."

The parish books of All Saints, Huntingdon, contain two items relating to penance which have a special interest.

"1621, Johannes Tomlinson, Rector. Oliverus Cromwell, filius Roberti, reprehensus coram totam ecclesiam profectis."

Five years later appears this:—"Jo. Tomlinson, Rector, 1626. Hoc anno Oliverus Cromwell fecit ponitentiam corum totam ecclesiam."¹

The following excerpt from the *Worcester Journal* of December 18, 1766, has a peculiarity of its own:—

"A few Sundays ago Mr. M. of a certain parish not a thousand miles from Pershore, was married to Miss R. of the same parish, an agreeable young lady with a handsome fortune. That same morning Mr. M. for a certain familiar transaction with his housekeeper did penance in the same parish church in a white robe, immediately after which the ceremony of marriage between him and Miss R. commenced, she, with her own father, who gave her away, waiting in church while the penance was performing."

¹ *Ecclesiologist*, vol. xxiii., p. 199.

In the Court Book of the Peculiar of Middleham in Yorkshire, for the year 1799, is the following item :—

“That Thomas Ibbotson should be suspended from his office of Parish Clerk, without forfeiting his wages, until the tenth day of February then next, and that he do not approach the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper on that day, that, by the prayers of Lent, he might be fitted for it at the Festival of Easter, and lastly, that, on the first Sunday of the ensuing Lent, he should stand during service until the Nicene Creed was read, before the font under the gallery, and then depart to a private seat, after having read distinctly the following acknowledgment :—

“I, Thomas Ibbotson, do acknowledge that, on the day of the Feast of Circumcision, I behaved very irreverently in the House of God, and that I interrupted the divine service, and conducted myself in such a manner, both in the church and out of it, as to give just cause of offence to the congregation then present ; that I was led to this misconduct by resentment, and not being perfectly sober at the time, for which I beg pardon of Almighty God, and do promise to order myself with greater sobriety and decency for the time to come.”¹

There are instances known in which irregular penances were performed. The following, I take it, was one of them, and was imposed either by their sect, or by the fanatics upon themselves :—

“December 22. A man and woman, Quakers, walked through the streets of Bristol, Gloucester, and Oxford, at separate times, clothed in hair sackcloth, repeating something as they passed along, doing penance for,” etc. etc.²

¹ *Ecclesiologist*, vol. vii., p. 246.

² *Gentleman’s Magazine* (1748), p. 571.

It is generally supposed that doing public penance is quite a thing of the distant past, and, perhaps, even the case given above, of penance being undergone in 1799, will surprise some readers. I have, however, amongst my memoranda, instances occurring up to the middle of the present century. In the *Church Times* of February 13th, 1880, a lady correspondent wrote from Manchester to say that, some time about the year 1845, a gentleman, holding a good position in a midland city, said of a lady in the same city that he had seen her drunk in the streets. For this slander, her husband prosecuted him in the civil courts, and her father in the Consistory Court of the diocese. In the former he was fined £300, and in the latter the then chancellor sentenced him to do penance in a white sheet at the door of his parish church on the following Ash Wednesday. What renders this case more curious is that the "slander" in question was a fact known to be true!

Public penance for defamation of character was done in the parish church of Westbury-on-Severn, Newnham, Gloucestershire, on July 8, 1846.

The Rev. W. J. Frere tells me that Sister —— of St. Barnabas, Leeds, informed him that, as a child, she saw in Kirk Christ, Callan, Isle of Man, four or five persons standing in sheets in the church to do penance during Lent.

In 1849, an inhabitant of a village in Cambridgeshire was sentenced by the Ecclesiastical Court to do penance, having been found guilty of the charge of defamation of character brought against him by the wife of the rector.

If the same discipline were exercised now, which, as the Prayer Book says, "is much to be wished," it would, methinks, go far to put a stop to ill-natured gossip, and to the circulation of malevolent stories which is so common in the present day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CLERGY.

THE services for the ordination of deacons and priests, and for the consecration of bishops, which come next in the Prayer Book, indicate that matters of Church Folklore connected directly with the clergy should now be dealt with. The late Canon Humble, writing in 1874, remarked that the word "priest," as applied to the clergy, was universal throughout the north of England. A friend once told him that in walking out of Newcastle some years before, he was attracted by a boy, who was in advance, audibly fixing upon the trade or profession of everyone he met. After making several shrewd guesses, he said of one passing him, "And thou's a preacher;" in a short time meeting a clergyman he remarked, "And thou's a priest."

The canon went on to say that "the name really expresses the thought of the sacred character borne by the clergy. It is quite generally admitted that a priest may go anywhere, and at any time of the day or night, and he will never be molested if it be known what he is.

"During strikes, as they used to be conducted thirty years ago, with violence and great personal abuse, the clergy, though they universally opposed the men, greatly owing to the extreme lawlessness of their proceedings, could address large numbers of pitmen as to their duties without eliciting anything more than a quiet remonstrance that the clergy did not know what they (the men) had to bear from under-strappers.

"I remember on one occasion the men who were in extreme want organised bands to go about the country and ask for bread, and their numbers struck terror into the people in lonely places, and they gave them whatever they asked for.

"One such party came to my lodgings. I went out and addressed them, and told them that not only would I not give them anything, coming in the menacing way they did, but that I would advise every one I could influence to refuse them also. The men began to justify themselves, and were for arguing out the case. A layman under such circumstances would have been very roughly treated. Coal-owners at that time sent their plate and other valuables to the residences of the clergy. The approach of the clergyman is signalled by the first person who sees him, so that anything not very respectable that is going on may be stopped in time: 'Hush, hush, here's the priest.'"

In harmony with this is what the Rev. Eddowes of St. Jude's, Bradford, states. When he was curate of Garton-in-the-Wolds in the East Riding of Yorkshire, the clergyman was always spoken of as the "priest." He says that he was called by the poor "the Garton Priest," and similarly the vicars around were known by the name of their parishes. It is the same, as another clergyman has told me, in the North Riding. The Rev. Thomas Fenton, Vicar of Ings, Kendal, says that to this day the old people thereabouts speak of "Priest Strickland" (of Staveley) and of "Parson Airey" (of Ings or Hugil); the two churches are not a couple of miles apart. The writer does not mention why this distinction is made between the two clergymen.

To show that the clerical title mentioned was not peculiar to the north of England, I would draw attention to a passage in "My Life," by Mr. T. Sidney Cooper, R.A., who was born in 1803 at Canterbury, and spent all his early years in that city. In relating an anecdote of his meeting the Archbishop

of Canterbury in the year 1815, Mr. Cooper writes thus:—"I said to myself, 'That's a priest.' In those days the boys called all parsons 'priests,' and I could see he was a clergyman of some sort."¹

Few persons, I imagine, are aware of the existence of the title "Lord Rector," as belonging to a clergyman. Before me is a letter from the Rev. R. Noble Jackson, Vicar of Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, and Lord Rector of Sudeley—the place, by the way, where Queen Katharine Parr was buried. It contains such out-of-the-way information that I must give it in full. The letter bears date Sept. 4, 1888. Mr. Jackson writes from Winchcombe as follows:—

"It is not in my capacity as vicar of this parish, but as having charge of an adjacent parish of Sudeley, that I am Lord Rector thereof. I am resigning this living, but shall still retain that of Sudeley, *with its vast honours and emoluments*. The fact is that the endowment of Sudeley being so small, and the population not a hundred, I, like my predecessors, have held the two livings, but the offices are quite distinct—Vicar of Winchcombe, and Lord Rector of Sudeley. As to the latter title (I believe there are five other lord rectors in England) I suppose it is connected with the copyhold lands belonging to the living. I have now open before me, and partially unrolled, the Court Roll of the parish of Sudeley, to which my immediate predecessor added in his lifetime (by measurement just made) more than twelve yards. In it, for instance, unrolling to his immediate predecessor I find this:—

"The Court Baron of the Rev. J. J. Lates, etc., Rector of Sudeley, and Lord of the Manor aforesaid, holden 9th of March, in the eighth year of our Sovereign Lord George Fourth, and in the year of our Lord, 1827, before John

¹ Vol. i., p. 45.

James Lates, Lord of the said Manor, William Staite and Thomas Hale, homage sworn,' etc. etc."

Whilst engaged upon clerical titles, I must transcribe another letter, received by me ten years ago in reply to inquiries relative to that of "Archpriest." The Rev. Fitzwilliam John Taylor, dating from East Ogwell Rectory, Newton Abbot, Devon, writes :—

"I understand that there are in the diocesan registry office, at Exeter (though I have never seen them) documents setting forth the privileges of the Archpriest of Hacombe, the chief being immunity from any but Archiepiscopal visitations; the right to sit next the bishop on all public occasions, and to wear lawn sleeves. I do not know whether my predecessor, Mr. Carew, ever exercised this latter privilege, but I have never done so myself. I was, however, instituted formally to the Rectory or Archpriesthood of Hacombe, and you will perceive by a slip from our diocesan calendar, which, I append, that I am there called 'Archpriest.' I also never answer at the visitations of the bishop or archdeacon when Hacombe is called.

"I have heard that there is another archpriest somewhere in England, but I cannot tell you where."

The item in the Exeter Diocesan Calendar, to which Mr. Taylor refers, runs thus :—

"Taylor, Fitzwilliam John, R. E. and W. Ogwell, and Archpriest of Hacombe. Newton Abbot . . . 1842."

But if the clerical titles of "Archpriest" and "Lord Rector" sound strange to most ears, what is to be said to that of "Cardinal in St. Paul's"? Yet such is the title held at the present day by two of the twelve minor canons of the London Cathedral. On the title page of his book,

"Chapters in the History of Old St. Paul's," Dr. Sparrow Simpson, F.S.A., describes himself as "Junior Cardinal in St. Paul's Cathedral." From a later book by the same author, called "Gleanings from Old St. Paul's," I learn that among the Harleian MSS.¹ is a volume of "Fragments" collected by one Thomas Gybbons, Esq., in which occurs the following passage:—"The Church of St. Paul's had, before the time of the conqueror, two cardinals, which office still continue (*sic*). They are chosen by the dean and chapter out of the number of the twelve petty canons, and are called *Cardinales Chori*. Their office is to take notice of the absence or neglect of all the quire, and weekly to render account thereof to the dean and chapter. . . . Not any cathedral church hath cardinals beside this, nor are any beyond seas to be found to be dignified with this title, saving the churches of Rome, Ravenna, Aquileia, Millan, Pisa, Beneuent in Italy, and Compostella in Spayn" (p. 6).

Two or three pages further on we are told that the college of minor canons consists of twelve priests, of whom the first is sub-dean, and the second and third, *Cardinales Chori*. Their several duties are described, and it is said that "by way of recompense for these manifold labours they shall receive certain offerings of the faithful, and also a larger portion of bread and beer."

From the answers to the inquiries made at the first visitation of the Bishop of London (Bancroft) in 1598, respecting the reading of prayers at 5 o'clock in the morning in summer, and 6 o'clock in the winter, it was stated that it was always done by the "Petticannons" in their course, "savage the sub-dean and the two cardinals, who have byn allwayes freed from that dutye."

Let us now go on to consider the social status of the clergy in times gone by.

There is (says Mr. Overton) an odd illustration of the

¹ Harleian MSS., No. 980, fo. 179, A.

immeasurable distance which was supposed to separate the bishop from the curate in "Cradock's Reminiscences." Bishop Warburton was to preach at St. Lawrence's Church in behalf of the London Hospital. "I was," writes Cradock, "introduced into the vestry by a friend, where the Lord Mayor and others were waiting for the Duke of York, who was their president, and in the meantime the bishop did everything in his power to entertain and alleviate their patience. He was beyond measure condescending and courteous, and even graciously handed some biscuits and wine on a salver to the curate who was to read prayers."¹

Dean Swift, in his "Project for the Advancement of Religion," speaks of curates in the most contemptuous terms. In London a clergyman, with one or two sorry curates, has sometimes the care of above 20,000 incumbent on him.

The following note shows what remuneration for casual clerical duty was customary two hundred years ago.

Stackhouse, in his "Miseries and Great Hardships of the Inferior Clergy in and about London," tells us that they were objects of extreme wretchedness. They lived in garrets, and appeared in the streets in tattered cassocks. The common fee for a sermon was a shilling and a dinner, for reading prayers, twopence and a cup of coffee.

And then as to their families: the following picture drawn by Dean Swift of the poorer clerical households is a sad one. He says that the wife is little better than Goody in her birth, education, and dress, and as to himself, we must let his parentage alone. If he be the son of a farmer it is very sufficient, and his sister may be very decently chamber-maid to the squire's wife. He goes about on working days in a grazier's coat, and will not scruple to assist his workmen in harvest time. His daughter shall go to service, or be sent apprentice to the sempstress in the

¹ Abbey and Overton: vol. ii., ch. i.

next town, and his sons are put to honest trades. This is the usual course of an English vicar with from £20 to £60 a year.

We must bear in mind that Dean Swift was not over-scrupulous as regards the statements which he made, and we must take his words for what they are worth. Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that Mr. Overton is not far off the truth when he suggests that Fielding's character of Parson Adams and Parson Trulliber are fair specimens of the higher and lower type of the poorer class of clergy of that day.

I have picked up some rather curious items relative to the refreshment provided for the clergy in past days. An instance was given above; here are two or three more. The following item appears in the vestry minutes at Havering-atte-Bower in Essex:—

“At a Vestry held at St. Marie's Chappel, Havering, ye 9th of Nov., 1717.

“Agreed— Y^t a pint of sack be allowed y^e minister y^t officiates y^e Lord's Day y^e winter season.”¹

In the north of England they seem to have been exceptionally liberal to the clergy. Thus in the vestry book of the parish of Preston, under date April 19, 1731, it is ordered that two bottles of wine be allowed any strange clergyman that shall at any time preach.² Query—was this intended as his fee, or had he a money gift besides?

An old curate of Romford recollects that when charity sermons were preached for the parochial schools, the vestry table was covered with a large white communion cloth, and that bottles of Port and Sherry, with plates of almonds

¹ *Notes and Queries* (1860), p. 90.

² *Ibid.*, (1860), p. 187.

and raisins, biscuits, etc., were provided for the clergymen and their friends.¹

The Rev. Bowyer Vaux of Great Yarmouth states that fifty years ago, at St. Philips, Birmingham, wine was always placed on the vestry table on Sunday for the refreshment of the clergy. He has himself partaken of it several times. I remember hearing about this when, as a boy, I used to attend that church, and thinking what a very comfortable arrangement it was.

At some of the city churches in London—St Dionis, Backchurch, for instance—there was formerly, and perhaps still is, a similar custom according to a contributor to *Notes and Queries*. He adds that on occasions when the Lord Mayor and other members of the Corporation attend in state, wine, cake, and biscuits are handed round to all who have the *entrée* at the close of the morning service.

It was not always that the good things in the vestry were confined to the clergy and their privileged friends. It has been the custom from time immemorial to mark the return of Palm Sunday at Hentland Church, Ross, in a peculiar manner. The minister and congregation receive from the churchwardens, a cake or bun, and, in former times, a cup of beer also. This is consumed within the church, and is supposed to imply a desire on the part of those who partake of it, to forget all past animosities, and thus prepare themselves for Easter.²

We now come to the question of Pluralities. The following instances of the enjoyment of these by the higher clergy, and their indulgence in non-residence, will give some idea of the church abuses which were tolerated a hundred and fifty years ago. The great aim of these dignified clerics seems to have been to get as much prefer-

¹ *Notes and Queries* (1860), p. 354.

² *Ibid.*, (1865), p. 171.

ment as they could, and to keep it as long as possible. The amount of subserviency which they must have been guilty of to those in high position who had good things at their disposal is humiliating to contemplate. One would not have been surprised at anything from bishops like Burnet and Hoadley, but men of a far higher type, speaking generally, seem in the matters of pluralities and non-residence, to have known no such thing as conscience, or even to have had an idea that they were doing anything scandalous.

Bishop Newton, the amiable and learned author of "Dissertations on the Prophecies," mentions it as an act of almost Quixotic disinterestedness, that when he obtained the deanery of St. Pauls, *i.e.* in addition to his bishopric, he resigned his living in the city, having held it for twenty-five years. In another passage he plaintively enumerates the various preferments he had to resign on taking the bishopric of Bristol (1761-1782). He was obliged to give up the prebendal stall at Westminster, the precentorship of York, the lectureship of St. George's, Hanover Square, and the genteel office of sub-almoner. On another occasion we find him conjuring his friend, Bishop Pearce, of Rochester, not to resign the deanery of Westminster.

Herring held the deanery of Rochester *in commendam* with the bishopric of Bangor (1738-1743). Wilcocks was Bishop of Rochester (1731-1748), and Dean of Westminster, and was succeeded both in the deanery and the bishopric by Zachary Pearce (1756-1774). Hoadley held the See of Bangor for six years (1716-1721), apparently without ever seeing the diocese in his life. . . . Bishop Watson, of Llandaff, gives a most artless account of his non-residence (1782-1816). "Having," he tells us, "no place of residence in my diocese, I turned my attention to the improvement of land. I thought the improvement of a man's fortune by cultivating the earth, was the most useful and honourable

way of providing for a family. I have now, for several years, been occupied as an improver of land and a planter of trees." The same bishop gives us the most extraordinary description of the sources whence his clerical income was derived. "The provision of £2,000," he says, "which I possess from the Church, arises from the tithes of two churches in Shropshire, two in Leicestershire, two in my diocese, three in Huntingdonshire, on all of which I have resident curates; of five more appropriations to the bishopric, and two more in the isle of Ely as appropriations to the archdeaconry of Ely." From a letter of George III., to Mr. Pitt, in 1787, it would seem that public opinion was at last somewhat outraged by the existence of these evils. The king, himself, felt strongly the mischief they were doing, but he could only protest ineffectually against their continuance.¹

This is a long extract, but I have thought well to give it, as it presents in such a graphic manner the state of things in the English Church in the "good old times." Scandals, like those above related, may, perhaps, be thought to be things entirely of the past. Not so. I happen to know a parish, forty miles from London, where the late incumbent, who resigned about three years ago, had not been in residence for over fifty years. I trust that in these days this is a unique case.

In connection with what has been said above, the condition in which the Scilly Isles were left as regards church privileges above a century ago is worth noting.

In 1774, according to some writers, there was only one ecclesiastical person upon the Scilly Islands, whose residence was at St. Mary's, and who visited the other islands once a year. But Campbell, in his "Political Survey," says that service is performed and sermons preached, or rather read, every Sunday in the churches of these islands by an

¹ Abbey and Overton: vol. ii., p. 11.

honest layman appointed for that purpose.¹ What we call lay readers were, if I mistake not, recognised by convocation about two hundred years previous to the date given above.

Until a comparatively recent date, the neglect of the secular authorities in dealing with prisoners is notorious, and when their temporal needs were so ill looked after it is not to be expected that attention should have been paid to their spiritual requirements. More than three hundred years ago, public attention was called to this. Bishop Latimer, in a sermon preached before Edward VI. in 1549, said :—"Oh, I would ye would resort to prisons! a commendable thing in a Christian realm. I would wish there were curates of prisons, that we might say 'the Curate of Newgate,' 'the Curate of the Fleet,' and I would have them waged for their labour." A contributor to *Notes and Queries*, in 1850, states that gaol chaplains were made universal by Act of Parliament in the fourth year of George IV. Before that they may have existed in some places. In Gloucestershire from 1786.

Most people are aware that men in holy orders are disqualified from sitting in the House of Commons. This was finally settled by 41 Geo. III., c. 63, an Act passed in 1801. This Act had especial reference to the political agitator, Horne Tooke, who was a priest, having been ordained in 1760, and through his interest with Lord Camelford had been appointed to represent the borough of Old Sarum in the House of Commons. There was at the same time a deacon M.P. This was the Rev. Edward Rushworth member for Newport, in the Isle of Wight. Both these members retained their seats until the dissolution in June 1802.

The following instance of a diplomatic deacon is pro-

¹ *Notes and Queries* (1856), p. 222.

bably without a parallel during the last two hundred years.

In the "Lexington Papers" mention is made of a Mr. Robert Sutton, who, after having taken deacon's orders, and having accompanied his relative, Lord Lexington, to Vienna in the joint capacity of chaplain and secretary, was, on his recall in 1697, appointed resident minister at the Imperial Court; was subsequently sent as envoy extraordinary to the Ottoman Porte; in 1720, succeeded Lord Stair as British minister in Paris; in 1721 was elected M.P. for Notts; and in 1725 was created Knight of the Bath.¹

There were formerly, as all know, parishes which were called "Peculiars," and which were exempt from the jurisdiction of the bishop of the diocese in which they were situated, and subject only to the metropolitan. As the clergy in these parishes were in a somewhat abnormal position, one or two notes respecting them will not be out of place here.

Romford, Essex, is a civil parish, but is not separated from Hornchurch for ecclesiastical purposes. All the tithes, great and small, of Hornchurch and Romford were given to New College, Oxford, by William of Wykeham, five hundred years ago, and are still held by that society. There is no endowment, properly so called, attached to the church at Romford, but a yearly stipend of £700 is granted by New College. The so-called Vicar of Romford is neither instituted nor inducted, but holds his position, under a private deed, from New College, and, I understand, is not bound to residence at Romford, nor restrained from holding a benefice with the cure of souls elsewhere. This was the case formerly, but it may not hold good now. In the vestry book at Romford are, as I am told, several minutes made by successive bishops, who, being allowed to

¹ *Notes and Queries*, Jan. 3, 1852.

officiate in the church, were required to disclaim any authority or power therein.

The Rev. the Hon. F. G. Dutton, Vicar of Bibury, Fairford, has told me that Bibury was a "Peculiar" till 1847, when it shared the fate of other "Peculiars," and was placed under the jurisdiction of the bishop. Mr. Cresswell, the previous vicar, always refused to allow Bishop Monk to enter the church.

CHAPTER IX.

LAY CHURCH OFFICIALS.

AMONG lay church officers the churchwardens naturally stand first. At the present day it is probable that but few of those who hold the office are aware how multifarious and important are their duties. The popular notion would seem to be that they are in some way responsible for the well-being of the Church fabric, and the preservation of the "ornaments," with certain other minor matters. Not so, their responsibility extends much farther than this. According to Canon 113, they are to take care for the suppressing of all sin and wickedness in their parishes, and to take note of persons who have a general evil character among their neighbours, and to present them to those who have ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Indeed the multiplicity as well as the invidious nature of their defined duties led a writer at the beginning of the century to say, that notwithstanding that they were solemnly bound to all kinds of unpleasant and compromising work, very few steps were taken towards the performance of their duties. In some parishes, however, a semblance of paying regard to their oaths seems to have been kept up. I believe that at Hope, near Sheffield, for instance, it was formerly the custom during the morning service, after the banns had been published, or if no banns after the second lesson, for the churchwardens to leave the church and to go round the public-houses near the churchyard to see that all was quiet. This done, they returned to the church in time for the

sermon. A friend tells me that this used to be very generally done in the West Riding of Yorkshire in times gone by, and that even so lately as in 1872 the churchwardens of one parish got into trouble through the police finding them drinking in a public-house which they had visited officially during morning service. At Manchester, at the close of the last century, it was the custom for the chief magistrate of the town, with the churchwardens and police officers, to leave the church after the first lesson, and to compel all persons found in the streets to come into the church or pay a fine.

At Acton Church in Cheshire I am told that as recently as fifty years ago one of the churchwardens used to walk round the church during service time with a long wand, with which he gave a tap on the head to any member of the congregation who seemed to require it. We shall see lower down that this duty was generally relegated to an inferior officer.

The appointment of women as churchwardens is not unknown. I am told that in 1890 a lady officiated in that capacity at Pill in Somersetshire; and the *Guardian*, giving an account of the Easter vestries in its issue of May 27, 1891, announced that the Vicar of Machynlleth had nominated as his churchwarden the Dowager-Marchioness of Londonderry, who accepted the office.

If the churchwardens' books in country places were well searched a number of queer old-world usages would be brought to light. I cannot refrain from giving the following item, not merely because it relates to a bit of vulgar credulousness on the part of our rural populations, which it is to be hoped is fast dying out, but for the delightful comment made upon it by my correspondent.

In the churchwardens' accounts in a parish in Worcestershire, frequent mention is made of sums paid for "killing urchins." In sending me this note the vicar humorously

remarks :—" In my ignorance I at first supposed it to represent the way of keeping down the population, or of securing order in the Sunday School in these remote regions, but better informed people told me that these items only refer to the scarcely less reprehensible slaughter of innocent hedgehogs."

A good many queer usages cluster round the office of parish clerk. It was the clerk who always gave out the hymns, or rather metrical psalms, with the prefatory words, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God," a usage which can, I presume, be still retained only in the most out-of-the-way parishes. It was the clerk who published all the notices, both religious and secular—for the most secular announcements were often made during service, such as would never be heard now. About the oddest of these notices that I have come across is the following.

About the year 1838 the clerk of a parish in Lancashire, in the course of his ordinary duties as notice-giver in church, had to announce that some carrots had been stolen from the vicar's garden, and that a sovereign would be awarded to anyone who would give such information as would lead to the detection of the thief. The clerk himself had stolen the carrots, some of which were boiling on his fire for dinner at the time that he gave the notice. In the afternoon his wife informed against him, and claimed the reward. That woman was certainly a fine specimen of a managing housewife, to get both the carrots and the money!

It will serve to illustrate the free-and-easiness with which the services of the Church were conducted in former days in some country parishes if I relate what was told me by a gentleman, who vouched for the strict accuracy of the story. When a boy, he was passing through a village one Sunday morning, and turned into the church for ser-

vice. He was shown into a pew close to the "three-decker." Towards the end of the prayers the parson leant over towards the clerk's desk, just below him, and said, in quite an audible voice, "John, is Parliament sitting?" "What do you say?" "Shall I pray for the Parliament?" "Yes, I think you'd better; they're a damned bad lot."

In the seventeenth century it would appear that there was often a difficulty in providing remuneration for the parish clerk, and the custom of having "Clerk Ales" was still kept up. These, as I have already said, were gatherings at which the feasters contributed the materials, and the proceeds were devoted to increasing the parish clerk's too meagre salary.

From the communications which appear in one issue of *Notes and Queries*—that of October 8th, 1853—in relation to women acting as parish clerks, I imagine that this has been no very unusual arrangement in times past. In that one number of the publication we have five correspondents giving instances. One quotes from Burns' "Parish Registers," p. 110, as follows:—"1802, March 2nd. Buried Elizabeth King, widow, for forty-six years clerk of the parish, in the ninety-first year of her age." Another states that in 1828, a woman was clerk in the parish of Sudbrook, near Lincoln, and died in that capacity a few years afterwards. A third remarks that a woman has long officiated as parish clerk at Ickburgh, near Thetford, and still continues acting in that capacity. Another refers to Madame D'Arblay's Diary, vol. i., p. 246. "There was at Collumpton (Devon) only a poor, wretched, ragged woman, a female clerk, to show us this church. She pays a man for doing the duty while she receives the salary in right of her deceased husband." And lastly, Mr. Herbert L. Allen writes that at Misterton, near Crewkerne, Somerset, Mary Mountford was clerk for more than thirty years. She gave up the office about the year 1832, and is now (1853) in Beaminster

Union, just 89 years old. Similarly, Mrs. Sheldon was clerk at Wheatley in Oxfordshire, in the earlier part of this century, and the sexton's mother held the like office at Avington, Hungerford, for twenty-six years. It is worth mentioning that at the present time the parish clerk at St. Margaret-at-Cliffe, near Dover, is a woman—Mrs. Goldsack. She succeeded to the office on the death of her husband.

Those who are interested in the question of the legality of such appointments should consult Prideaux's "Directions to Churchwardens," *Rex v. Stubbs*, 2 T.R. 359, and *Olive v. Ingram*, 2 Strange, 1114.

The office of parish clerk has not infrequently been handed on from father to son during a lengthened period. Thus the family of Osborns at Bellbroughton, and of Rose at Bromsgrove, have supplied hereditary parish clerks through many generations. The Osborns have been tailors since Henry VIII.'s time, and can trace their descent three centuries further back. The office of parish clerk has been hereditary in the parishes of Hope and of King's Norton.¹ As the writer deals only with those which he knows in Worcestershire, we may be sure that similar instances might be found to exist in other counties.

Sextons appear also to have sometimes inherited their office. The *Derbyshire Advertiser* is said to have contained the following obituary notice:—"On January 23, 1854, aged 86, Mr. Peter Bramwell, sexton of the parish church of Chapel-en-le-Nith. The deceased served the office of sexton forty-three years; Peter Bramwell, his father, fifty years; George Bramwell, his grandfather, thirty-eight years; George Bramwell, his great-grandfather, forty years; and Peter Bramwell, his great-great-grandfather, fifty-two years. Total—two hundred and twenty-three years."

¹ *Notes and Queries*, May 27, 1854.

To return to the question of female church officials. Mr. Cripps, in his "Laws of the Church and Clergy,"¹ states that it has been decided that a woman may be chosen for, and exercise the office of sextoness, and vote in the election of one. The reason given by the court in arriving at this decision—notwithstanding that it was argued that women could not vote for members of Parliament—was that, as this was an office which did not concern the public, nor the care and inspection of the morals of parishioners, there was no reason why a woman who paid the rates should not vote. This was not altogether as complimentary as it might have been to the gentler sex, and after our recent experiences it is very touching to learn that members of Parliament, as such, are to be looked upon as guardians of public morals!

Several years ago I asked certain intelligent and generally well informed friends whether they had ever heard of the "dogwhipper" as a recognised church officer, and in every case the reply was in the negative. This I did to satisfy myself as to how far old church customs were likely to be familiar to the class of persons for whom this volume is designed. The result of the simple inquiry seemed to justify the preparation and publication of this book as being likely to contain a record of things not generally known.

The "dogwhipper" in our churches was formerly, I take it, pretty nearly as regularly appointed an officer as the sexton, and in a number of parishes the title is still retained. In the parish in which I am writing now the man who keeps order amongst the boys at church—"troublesome young dogs"—is known by the elder people as the "dogwhipper." Five and forty years ago an announcement appeared in the *Exeter Gazette*, that Mr. Jonathan Pritchard, in the employ of the Rev. Chancellor Martin, had been ap-

¹ Cripps, p. 203, 6th edition.

pointed dogwhipper of Exeter Cathedral in the room of Mr. Charles Reynolds, deceased, and the Vicar of Danby has told me that up to the middle of the present century this officer was regularly on duty in his parish. The man always displayed the lash of his whip, which hung out of his pocket. The office no longer exists there.

Our American cousins also had similar functionaries, as will be seen from an entry in the vestry book of Shrewsbury parish, in the diocese of Maryland, as follows :—

“1725, May 1. Agreed that Thomas Thornton shall keep and whip the dogs out of the church every Sunday till next Easter Monday, and also the cattle from about the churchyard, for a hundred pounds of tobacco.”¹

Truly a characteristic mode of payment.

In some parishes what were known as “dog tongs” were provided, arranged after the fashion of the “lazy tongs” sometimes used by shopkeepers to reach light goods from their windows. Thus at the parish church of Llanynys, near Denbigh, a pair of these exist, which, when closed, are about 2 feet 6 inches long, and when opened for use would extend to a distance of 7 or 8 feet. The effect in church when a dog was gripped by the instrument must have been interesting. The vicar tells me that no one now living in the parish remembers their being used. If they had been used, anybody who happened to be in church would have remembered it. Those who were at the Rhyl Church Congress, in 1891, and visited the Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition, may remember that a pair of wooden dog tongs formed an item in the loan collection there. They were the identical pair of which I have just spoken.

According to Mr. J. Charles Cox, F.S.A., there is a similar instrument preserved in the church of Clynnog-Fawr in

¹ *Notes and Queries*, September 2, 1854.

the diocese of Bangor. In these the clipping part appears to have been furnished with short spikes.

The same gentleman describes the old dogwhippers' implement, such as was commonly in use, as a whip with a thong about three feet long, fastened to a short ash stick with a band of twisted leather round the handle. An article of this kind is preserved in Baslow Church, an ancient chapel of Bakewell, Derbyshire.

Money was sometimes bequeathed to endow the office. At Barton Turf, Norfolk, the parish clerk has the rent of three acres of land called "dogwhippers' land," and the Vicar of Chislet has sent me the following extract from the benefaction board in his church:—"Ten shillings are to be paid yearly to a dogwhipper, charged on an acre of marsh land belonging to Sir John W. H. Brydges." In the parish of Peterchurch in Herefordshire an acre of land is appropriated to the use of the official who keeps dogs out of church.

In some places the dogwhipper had another duty to perform, *viz.* that of keeping people awake during sermon time. Thus Richard Dovey of Farncote in Shropshire, in 1659, charged certain cottages with the payment of eight shillings to some poor man of the parish of Claverly for awakening sleepers and turning dogs out of church. The benefaction board in Trysull Church in Staffordshire states that John Rudge by his will, dated 1725, gave five shillings a quarter to waken people who slept during sermon time, to keep dogs out of church, and to clean the church windows. In the churchwardens' accounts at Barton-on-Humber appears the following entry:—"1740. Paid Brocklebank for waking sleepers, two shillings." At Acton in Cheshire, and at Dunchurch, a man was, I believe, specially appointed to perform these duties. The implement which he used was a stick shaped like a hay fork, which was fitted on to the sleeper's neck, and it was, no

doubt, when well pushed home, sufficiently effectual. At Wolverhampton five shillings is to be paid for keeping boys quiet during service. No doubt this custom was fairly general.

In one parish of which I have an account the arrangement for waking sleepers was remarkably complete. The official who walked about the church had a long wand with a nob at one end, for the men and boys, and a fox's brush at the other, with which he tickled the nostrils of the ladies who happened to be found dozing. This delicate treatment of the fair sex, even in their erring moments, is worthy of all commendation and imitation.

Mr. A. J. Munby, F.S.A., tells me that at the east end of St. Crux Church, York, there is a gate commonly known as "Whip-ma-whop-ma Gate," where on Whitsun Tuesday (he thinks) every passing dog used to be whipped in consequence of a certain dog which had once stolen the Blessed Sacrament at St. Crux. This is a curious illustration of the sins of the fathers being visited on the children.

CHAPTER X.

CHURCH FURNITURE—ADJUNCTS, ETC.

I ENTER upon this portion of my subject with fear and trembling lest I should say something which will not find favour with this or that church architect. I must, however, run the risk, and hope for the best.

It was necessary to speak of pews in the opening chapter of this book as tending to illustrate certain matters there dealt with. There are, however, a few more remarks to be made which may suitably come in here.

Even in the middle of the last century, when pews were considered everywhere to be the correct thing, we find, as Mr. A. Ingleby reminds me, that at the rebuilding of West Wycombe Church, Bucks, somewhere about 1750, open seats and not square pews were erected, and these, I believe, are still in use. They formerly faced each other, but are now turned the other way. And similarly at Quedgeley, Gloucestershire, in the early part of this century, there were only two pews in the church; and these were evidently late innovations, the rest were the same low oak benches which are there now. Of course numerous instances could be given similar to these, but it was necessary to draw attention to the fact.

A correspondent whose letter appeared in *Notes and Queries*, February 2, 1865, mentions a Puritan pew in Long Melford Church, Suffolk, "entirely covered in." Upon this Mr. Benjamin Ferrey, F.S.A., stated that there was another pew of the kind in the church of Langley Marsh, Bucks.

It is on the north side, separated from the nave by a wooden lattice-work. The pew communicates with a small library of books on divinity, to which the occupant of the pew might retire without being noticed from the body of the church.

I am afraid that this description of the "pew" at Langley Marsh is calculated to be misleading. The church was built by the Kidderminsters, one of whom, Sir John Kidderminster, left a library of divinity for public use, which is deposited in the church. The space partitioned off is, I believe, not really a "pew" in the sense in which we generally employ the word, but merely a small room into which those who used the library might go and consult the books.

Mr. Thomas E. Winnington states that a pew, somewhat similar to the one described above, is extant in the small church of Shelsley Walsh, in the valley of the Teme. It is inclosed with richly carved woodwork to the height of the rood screen, to which it is adjacent on the south side of the small nave.

Perhaps the following note may not improperly come in now that we are considering the question of seats in church.

Dr. Jebb informs us that within the present century the space in front of the organ loft at Christ Church, Dublin, was appropriated to the verse singers of the anthem, who on Sunday mornings came up to the loft for this purpose only, having occupied their proper places in the choir during the rest of the service. This, he adds, was the old practice at the Chapel Royal in London, and at St. Patrick's.¹

Advocates of the "Free and Open" principles in our churches will scarcely read the next paragraph with satisfaction. It, however, relates to such a curious usage that I cannot possibly omit it.

¹ *Ecclesiologist*, October, 1862.

The following is, or was, the system pursued at Bury St. Edmunds, in the election for pews. Every ratepayer has a vote, and when a vacancy occurs by death or other cause, printed cards are issued by the new candidates requesting the favour of votes. Public-houses have been opened, and bribes offered to the poor to ensure success. Sometimes a coalition takes place between two candidates, who share the pew in case of success. On the day of the poll it is often found necessary to adjourn from the vestry to the Guild Hall to decide the election, the number of voters being so great. During late repairs or enlargement of accommodation at St. James' Church, in the town, all applicants for pews were expected to deposit "something handsome" in the hands of the lecturer towards the expenses.¹

A very curious arrangement of the font in the church of Milton, near Cambridge, is recorded by Mr. Morris Deck. "It is," he says, "built into the north pier of the chancel arch, and from the appearance of the masonry, etc., this is evidently the original position. I have," he continues, "visited some hundreds of churches, and this is the only instance I have observed of a font in this position. Numerous instances occur where it is built into the south-western pier of the nave."

It would be difficult to enumerate the various abominations which have taken place in our cathedrals in order to make room for monuments, often very hideous in themselves, of noted men who have departed. Mr. Abbey, quoting from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, notes how, in 1799, Carter recorded with indignation that in Westminster Abbey the font had been altogether removed to make place for some new monument, and was lying topsy turvy in a side room.

Scandals and evil customs die hard. We should at the

¹ *Ecclesiologist*, February, 1843.

present day probably have to visit a good many churches before we came upon one in which a common basin was used for baptism instead of the font itself. Fifty years ago, however, this was by no means uncommon in parishes wherein a Puritan incumbent bore sway. It would seem that the custom was introduced by the Protestant party in Elizabeth's reign, for we have Archbishop Parker writing to Lord Burleigh on Nov. 15, 1573, thus:—"I have been of late shamefully deceived by some young men, and so have I been by some older men. Experience doth teach. The world is much given to innovations, never content to stay to live well. In London our fonts must go down, and the brazen eagles which were ornaments in the chancel, and made for lectures, must be molten to make pots and basins for new fonts."

The object of these wretched fanatics was quite clear. They hated the sacramental system of the Church, and as they endeavoured, so far as they could, to degrade the altar, because it spake to the people of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, so they would try their best, by using basins instead of the old fonts, to degrade the sacrament of regeneration. In some cases they were able to get rid of the fonts altogether, and many of the old ones were destroyed. The usual way, however, was to put basins into the fonts. That this was a very common practice is evident from the fact that in the injunctions of Elizabeth, Oct. 10, 1561, we read:—"Item, that the font be not removed from the accustomed place; and that in Parryshe Churches the curates take not uppon them to confer baptism in basins, but in the font customably used."

Unfortunately, irreverence was not confined to the Puritans of olden time, and there are few of us who could not mention from their own personal observation many instances of utter disregard for holy places and things as shown by English churchmen even at the present time.

The subject is far from a pleasant one to dwell upon, and I will only mention one instance mentioned by a writer in the *Ecclesiologist* in April, 1846. He tells us that at East Shefford, Berks, the singers and musicians sit round the altar, and use it as a table. It stands a little way off the east wall, and has seats behind and at the ends for their convenience. It is difficult to imagine how any clergyman could have tolerated such a state of things.

We now come to the question of chancel screens as portions of the post-Reformation furniture in our churches. Thus there are such screens in St. Mary-le-bow, and St. Os- wells, Durham, and in the former also returned stalls. Post-Reformation screens may also be seen in the churches at Billingham, Brancepeth, Sedgfield, Essington, Sherburn Hospital Chapel, and at various other places.

On the screen of the church of St. Nicholas, Chislehurst (writes the Rev. F. H. Murray, the rector), for about two hundred years, from the Restoration probably, till 1849, were these words: "The lion roreth, his strength is an unicorn," with reference to the royal arms, which were formerly over the east window.

Eagles placed in the sanctuary, whence the Epistle and Gospel were read, are very unusual, nevertheless two such might be seen in St. Peter's, the parish church of Liverpool. At Exeter and Canterbury Cathedrals the eagle desks face east, and one is used for the Litany.¹

History repeats itself. In 1735, a painting of our Lady and the Holy Child was placed over the altar of St. James' Church, Clerkenwell. One Thomas Watson wrote to the Bishop of London very much in the style of a modern "Church Associationist," ignoring all forms of law, and demanding its removal, it being, as he said, "in my judg-

¹ *Ecclesiologist*, 1849 and 1842.

ment a reproach to Protestantism, and very near ally'd to images." ¹

Movable organs and pulpits in churches have not been altogether unknown of late years. The Rev. Dr. Sparrow Simpson, F.S.A., notes that in a pamphlet entitled, "The Temple Church: an Account of its Restoration and Repairs," by William Burge, published by Pickering in 1843, is the following passage:—"Mr. Etty justly observes that in St. Peter's, at the present day, the organ is very small compared with the building, and is wheeled about like the ancient pulpits to different parts of the church" (p. 34). Dr. Simpson adds, that King's College Chapel had two in his time, which were moved into the choir if required. The following appears in *Wesley's Journal* (August 15, 1781). Speaking of the Shrewsbury Hospital as it existed in his day Wesley says:—"The pulpit is movable; it rolls upon wheels, and is shifted once a quarter, that all the pews may face it in their turns; I presume the first contrivance of the kind in Europe." There is, I have heard, a movable pulpit in Norwich Cathedral.

In accordance with, or more strictly speaking, as a development of the injunction in Canon 80, which ordered that a Bible of the largest volume, the Books of Homilies allowed by authority, and the Book of Common Prayer, were to be provided for every church, we find still remaining in many churches books chained to desks for people to come and read them if they pleased. Of course their use is wholly obsolete. A more ludicrous idea could scarcely be conceived than to suppose that a countryman would go into the parish church after his work, or on a Sunday afternoon, to read "Jewel's Apology," or "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," perhaps in black letter. Some person, however,

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine* (1735), pp. 651, 666. Wood-cut of picture given in same vol., p. 679.

appears to have been interested in the chained books at Bridlington, Yorkshire, some half century ago, and to have gone to the church to examine them, for the silver mountings which adorned the binding disappeared, and have never been seen or heard of since.

I mentioned above the church library at Langley in Buckinghamshire; there is also a very curious old library in a chamber—over the vestry, I think—in Wimborne Minster, where the books are chained to the shelves. This collection consists of two hundred and forty volumes. The chains have not saved it from the dishonest spoiler, for twenty-five volumes are missing of those which were catalogued in 1765, and many of those which remain have fallen, from want of care, into a state of decay.

To give some sort of idea as to the kind of literature which was in olden time provided in many of our country churches for the edification of those who could not afford to buy books for themselves, I may mention a few, and I purposely take them in the main from parts of the kingdom widely separated from one another. The instances cited are, I think, fairly representative.

Impington, Cambridgeshire	{ “Foxe’s Book of Martyrs.” Black letter.
St. Nicholas, Rochester ...	{ A collection of cases, and other discourses to recover Dissenters to the Church of England.
Wrinton, Somersetshire ...	{ Several books, especially “Foxe’s Book of Martyrs,” and the “Clavis Bibliorum” of F. Roberts, who was rector of the parish in 1675.
Malvern Abbey Church, Worcestershire	{ Dean Comber’s “Companion to the Temple,” and “A Treatise on Church Unity.”
Leyland, Lancashire	{ “Foxe’s Book of Martyrs,” and “Jewel’s Apology,” both in black letter. Also “Preservative against Popery,” 2 vols., 1738.

St. Benet's, Grace Church, St., London	{ Erasmus's "Commentary on the Gospels," with chains attached, in possession of the churchwardens.
Kinver, Worcestershire ...	{ "Whole Duty of Man;" "Foxe's Book of Martyrs;" "Jewel's Sermon," in Latin.
Clew Magna, Somerset ...	"Jewel's Defence of the Church."
Longdon, Tewkesbury	Jewel's Works, folio — in parish chest.
Bridlington, Yorkshire ...	{ Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity," "Jewel's Controversial Works," Heylin's "Ecclesia Vindicata," and Comber's "Companion to the Temple."
Bromsgrove	Jewel's Sermon on 1 Cor. ix. 16 (1609).
Ecclesfield, Yorkshire	{ Thirteen books "chayned in the church," April 25, 1606. "Patristic and Mediæval Commentaries" for the most part—Latin, of course.
Little Stanmore, Middlesex	{ Many of the prayer books given by the Duke of Chandos are said, by Mr. Sperling in his "Walks about Middlesex" (p. 104), to still remain chained to the pews for the use of the poorer parishioners.

From our modern point of view, these (with the exception of the last) seem to be scarcely the kind of books likely to attract the general public. I should, however, be bitterly sorry to have them removed from our churches. Like the churches themselves, when rightly regarded, they serve as a chapter in old English Church History, and as such their loss would be very much to be lamented.

We now come to a very curious piece of church furniture which has fortunately been preserved in many places as a relic of the past; it is the hour-glass in the pulpit.

Although the church of St. Alban, Wood Street, in the city of London, has been "restored," which too often means having all the history taken out of it, the late rector, the Rev. H. J. Cummins, told me that Sir Gilbert Scott had left the old hour-glass, and that it is still to be seen at the side of the pulpit. The old church of St. Alban was one

of the eighty-nine churches which were destroyed by the fire of London in 1666. This church was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren, and finished in 1685. Consequently a pulpit hour-glass was in use subsequent to that date.

In the churchwardens' accounts in the parish of St. Helen, Abingdon, Berkshire, is the following entry:—"Anno MDXCI, 34 Eliz. Payde for an hour-glasse for the pulpit, 4d."

Under the year 1564 the following entry occurs in the books of Christ Church, St. Katharine's, Aldgate:—"Paide for an hour-glass that hangeth by the pulpit when the preacher doth make a sermon, that he may know how the hour passeth away."

A question arises in reference to this extract. Is the word "hour" to be understood as being synonymous with "time," or was it taken for granted that the people expected the preacher to go on for an hour, and that the proper thing was for him to close his discourse as soon as the sand in the upper portion of the glass had run out?

Not a few persons in most congregations now-a-days would be thankful if a quarter-of-an-hour-glass were affixed to the pulpit of the church which they attend, and made a fixture, so that the preacher could not turn it, as the Puritan did, saying, "Brethren, let's have another glass before we part."

The parishioners of Bibury would seem to have been exceptionally unfortunate in their vicar, for Fosbrooke mentions an incumbent there, whom he incorrectly (I think) terms "rector," who used to preach for two hours, regularly turning his glass. The squire of the parish appears to have adapted himself to circumstances, for after the text had been given out he left the church, "smoked" his pipe, and returned for the blessing.¹

The same author tells us that the priest had sometimes

¹ "British Monachism," p. 286.

a watch supplied to him by the parish. The authority cited for this is the following entry in the accounts of the chantry-wardens of a parish in Surrey:—"Received for priest's watch after he was dead, 13s. 4d."¹

The Cambridge Camden Society in "A Few Hints on the Practical Study of Ecclesiastical Antiquities," has the following:—"Hour-glass stand; a relick of Puritanick times. They are not very uncommon. They generally stand on the right hand of the pulpit, and are made of iron. Examples—Coton; Shepreth. A curious revolving one occurs at Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey, and in St. John's Baptist, Bristol, where the hour-glass itself remains. Though a Puritanick innovation it long kept its place, for Gay, in one of his Pastorals, writes:—

"He said that Heaven would take her soul no doubt,
And spoke the hour-glass her praise quite out.'

It is depicted by the side of a pulpit in one of Hogarth's paintings."

A contributor to *Notes and Queries* describes two hour-glass stands, the one at Pilton, near Barnstaple, the other at Tawstock, North Devon. In the latter instance it is displaced, and lies with a quantity of fragments of old armour, banners, etc., in a room over the vestry. These stands are similar in form, each representing a man's arm cut out of sheet iron and gilded, the hand holding the stand. Turning on a hinge at the shoulder it lay flat on the panels of the pulpit when not in use. When extended it would project about a yard.

It is worth while to give the following note from the pen of Dr. W. Sparrow Simpson, F.S.A., who, writing in 1854, stated that in the autumn of the previous year he saw an

¹ Manning's "Surrey," vol. i., p. 531.

hour-glass stand still attached to the pulpit in the minster at Berne.

In that curious place, the island of Axholme, in the north-west of Lincolnshire—an “island” as being surrounded by the rivers Trent, Don, etc.—there was, according to Mr. Edward Peacock, F.S.A., in 1853, when he visited the place, an iron hour-glass stand affixed to a pillar on the north side of Belton Church, which is in that district.

About the middle of the present century there remained a portion of an hour-glass frame affixed to the pulpit of Shelsley Beauchamp Church in Worcestershire. When the church was “restored,” as it is called, this little fragment of history was, of course, cleared away; but was very wisely preserved as a relic by the Rev. D. Melville, the rector.

There is an hour-glass in the church of Cowden, Kent, which is comparatively perfect. The rector, Dr. Burton, F.S.A., tells me that the tradition is, that before the rector's death, it will be discovered to be broken. This actually took place in the case of the last two rectors. It is now restored to its place once more.

Numerous other instances of pulpit hour-glasses, or at least their stands, still remaining, might be mentioned. Here are the names of a few of the churches, in addition to those already spoken of, in which they were to be seen forty years ago, but the destructive hand of the “restorer” may, for all I know, have swept them away. In Norfolk, at Wiggshall, Edingford, Salhouse, and South Burlingham; in Worcestershire, at Bishampton; in Northamptonshire, at Nappington; in Leicestershire, at Ashby Folville; and in Berkshire, at Binfield.

In Salhouse Church there is also remaining a curious relic in the shape of a bell on the screen between the nave and the chancel.

To pass on to other matters. The Rev. Dr. Hardman, of Bristol, tells me that, in many of the churches in Cornwall, a large board may be seen on the walls containing a copy of King Charles I.'s letter thanking the Cornish people for their loyalty.

The following transcript of a notice which appeared on a church door in Devonshire brings to remembrance a curious old tax which was levied in the days of our fathers or grandfathers—the Window Tax. Various methods were adopted to avoid it, some of them being not very reputable. The warning given by the notice below does not seem quite the thing to post upon a church door, as it suggests with sufficient plainness that the people should do something to cheat the revenue. The paper was taken down from Chivelstone church door in 1825 by the Rev. C. Holdsworth, Vicar of Stokenham, and is preserved as a curious relic by A. F. Holdsworth, Esq. of Widdicombe House, South Devon. It runs as follows:—

“Whoever hath a mind to make any alteration in their windows are desired to due it to-morrow, as the Sessor intend to be about the day after, or Wednesday.”

Mr. George Tweddell, of Stokesby, tells me that, in the church of Asby de la Zouch, there are finger-stocks for the punishment of badly-behaved people, and, so far as he is aware, the only ones in existence. He writes:—“I put my fingers in to try it, and when it was closed down I was as fast as a prisoner could be made. The holes for the finger-ends are perpendicular, for the remainder of each finger horizontal, and thus, when the top portion of the stocks is fastened down there is no escape, as you cannot get the fingers straightened to draw them out.” This implement is fastened to the wall under the west gallery.

Some of the older amongst us remember the “stocks”

proper being in use. They were, I think mostly employed in cases of drunkenness and disorderly conduct, and were always set up in some very public place, so that as many people as possible should see the culprit and take warning. I have, when a boy, oftentimes seen men in the stocks just outside the Police Office in Moor Street, Birmingham. I learn, from the *Ecclesiologist* of Feb. 1843, that at St. Ives in Cornwall, and at other places in that county, the parish stocks were placed and used in the church porch.

Very odd things are sometimes preserved as relics in churches. For example, in Holy Trinity, Minories, in the city of London, may be seen in a glass case the head of the Duke of Suffolk, father of Lady Jane Grey. He was executed on Tower Hill, and it is evident that the headsman made a bad shot the first time, and that the axe fell at the back of the skull, and could not sever the neck. The second blow lower down was more successful. The head is a ghastly object, and I do not recommend anybody to go and see it.

In the *Church Times* of Feb. 27, 1880, the following letter appeared from Mr. J. W. Hatchett, of Lothian Road, North Brixton. It relates to what is commonly known as the "Branks" or "The Scold's Bridle." Those who pass along some of the lower class streets in London may sometimes be sorry that it is not still in use.

"The church vestry of Walton-on-Thames contains a bridle constructed of steel to fit the human head. It consists of flat steel bands forming a network over the head, face, and round the nose, with a flat piece going in the mouth and fixing the tongue. It padlocks behind. It bears this inscription :

'Chester presents Walton with a bridle
To curb women's tongues that talk idle.'

There is also a date, and it is rusty with age. Belonging to a neighbouring parish, I saw it when a boy, and tried it on.

"I have heard two tales of its origination. (1) The man Chester, who lost considerable monies through the tongue of a female parishioner, presented it. (2) A woman applying for relief, being asked her parish, replied Chester, where she was sent, as was the custom, but, finding it a falsehood, Chester returns her bridled to Walton."

Most persons interested in antiquarian matters have heard of "Mother Ludlam's kettle," about the origin of which there has been a good deal of divergent speculation. Tradition says that in years gone by there was a witch named Mother Ludlam, who lived in a cave in the side of a hill overlooking the valley of Waverley, and a cauldron, which is said to have belonged to her, is still preserved in Frensham Church. The Rev. O. C. S. Lang, Rector of Frensham, near Farnham, Surrey, has been good enough to send me the following description of the vessel. "The dimensions are as follows:— $32\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, hammered out of a single sheet of copper, having an iron rim to which it is riveted, with drop-ring handles. There is an iron stand belonging to it with three legs, which raises it about a foot from the ground. It is mentioned, I believe, in all the old histories of Surrey." Mr. Lang adds, "It is said that no one can use the cauldron without ill fortune, and certainly the only time that I attempted to do so I broke the glass vessel with which I was experimenting in the cauldron full of water." Mother Ludlam's kettle is now kept in the basement of the tower of Frensham Church. For further particulars and local traditions, see Smith's "History of Farnham and Waverley Abbey," published in 1829.

CHAPTER XI.

HOLY DAYS AND SEASONS, AND THEIR CUSTOMS.

THE customs which in the past were connected with holy days and seasons were so numerous that it is difficult amongst the mass of material to know what to take and what to reject. It is also puzzling at times to distinguish those which really have a religious origin and others which seem to be purely secular. The border line between the two is often so faintly marked that it is no easy matter in these days to say where the one ends and the other begins. That which makes it the more puzzling is the fact that many of the customs which had, no doubt, a distinctly religious origin, have, in the course of years, become so secularised that their early history is lost in obscurity. In this volume it is no part of my design to investigate such matters critically, as I am writing for the instruction and amusement of the general public, and not for the edification of scientific antiquaries. These latter require a riper knowledge and an abler pen than mine.

There appear to be scarcely any special usages connected with St. Andrew's Day (November 30th). Mr. Walcot, F.S.A., tells us, however, that when St. Paul's Walk was a fashionable place of meeting, there was a club of persons who used to assemble at the reputed tomb of Duke Humphrey, on the morning of that day, and afterwards to dine together as if they were servants in his household.¹

What the origin of the following usage can be I am un-

¹ Walcot's "Cathedrals," p. 82.

able to suggest, but at Bozeat in Northamptonshire a bell is rung at noon on St. Andrew's Day, and the villagers call it "T' Andrew Bell." They make and eat a kind of sweet toffee on that day.

The old rule for finding the first Sunday in Advent ran thus:—

"Saint Andrew the king,
Three weeks and three days before Christmas comes in;
Three days after, or three days before,
Advent Sunday knocks at the door."

Mr. W. Chatterton Dix tells me that he remembers in his earlier days that at the church of St. Mary's, Redcliff, Bristol, it was the custom on Advent Sunday to place a few evergreens in the pulpit, desk, and churchwardens' pew. This was discontinued some twenty or more years ago.

It was formerly the custom in the north of England for poor women to carry about during Advent a couple of dolls dressed, the one to represent the Saviour and the other the Virgin Mary. A halfpenny was expected from every person to whom they were exhibited. It was esteemed a sign of very bad luck to any household that had not been visited by the "Advent Images" before Christmas Eve at the latest. The bearers of the images sung the well-known carol, beginning:—

"The first good joy that Mary had, it was the joy of one."

In Yorkshire there was formerly a saying, "As unhappy as the man that has not seen the Advent Images." ¹ Later on the reader will find a record of a somewhat similar custom still surviving in South Devon on May Day.

Another name was given to the Advent Images custom. It was sometimes called going about with the "Vessel

¹ "Book of Days," vol. ii., p. 725.

Cup," which, of course, was a corruption of "Wassail Cup," and denoted the good-will of the Image bearer towards those who gave her a present. The following verse was sometimes sung :—

" God bless the master of this house,
The mistress also,
And all the little children
That round the table go."

The late Dr. J. M. Neale, in his "Essays on Liturgiology,"¹ remarks that it is curious that the season of Advent should have retained its Latin name everywhere. He adds that the Sundays were not always reckoned in the same way, the more usual method being to count the first as fourth, and that nearest Christmas as the first.

St. Thomas' Day (December 21) was another occasion on which in many parts of the country the poor folk went round to the houses of their richer neighbours in the hope of getting the means of enjoying themselves at the coming Christmas tide. In some places it was called "going a gooding." In certain districts the festival was called "Doleing Day," and in others "Mumping Day." "Mumping" is from a Dutch word, and one of its recognised meanings, according to old Nick Bailey, is to "beg." Those who are familiar with the *Spectator* may remember that in one of his essays, Addison uses the word thus :— "The mumpers, the halt, and the blind." In Warwickshire, Chambers tells us that the custom which is being described was called "going a corning," from the poor folk carrying a bag, into which the farmers put corn. A contributor to *Notes and Queries*, in 1857, stated that the custom of "gooding" then existed in full force in Staffordshire, where all the poor folk went out on St. Thomas' Day

¹ P. 509.

in quest of alms. The clergyman was expected to give a shilling to each applicant, and all the well-to-do inhabitants contributed something either in money or in kind. The same writer tells us that at Harrington in Worcestershire it is customary for the children to go round the village on St. Thomas' Day, begging for apples, and singing:—

“ Wassail, wassail, through the town,
If you've got any apples, throw them down ;
Up with the stocking and down with the shoe,
If you've got no apples, money will do ;
The jug is white and the ale is brown,
This is the best house in the town.”

It appears that in former times those who received money or other gifts on these occasions recognised them by presenting to the donors sprigs of holly or mistletoe. Besides the usual donations received, it was not unusual for the women to be regaled at the houses of the squires and farmer with hot spiced ale, of which they frequently had more than they could conveniently carry away with them. It is curious to notice how, in all ages and countries, eating and drinking almost always formed an item in religious or quasi-religious observances.

The Rev. R. Noble Jackson has told me that on St. Thomas' Day at Winchcombe, the old people and children go from house to house begging for small sums of money. This they call “Thomasing.”

A host of old-world usages cluster round Christmas Eve and Christmas Day of course. Carols and carol singing, I think, ought to hold the first place. Perhaps the oddest sheet of carols ever printed is that mentioned by Hone in his “Every Day Book.” It is headed, “Christus natus est.” There is below a wood-cut ten inches high, and eight and a half inches wide, representing the stable at Bethlehem, Christ in the crib, watched by His mother and St. Joseph,

shepherds kneeling, angels attending, a man playing on the bagpipes, a woman with a basket of fruit on her head, a sheep bleating, an ox lowing, a crow cawing on the hay-rack, a cock crowing above them, and angels singing in the sky. The creatures have labels in their mouths bearing Latin inscriptions. Down the side of the wood-cut is the following:—"A religious man, inventing the conceits of both birds and beasts drawn in the picture of our Saviour's birth, doth thus express them: The cock croweth, *Christus natus est*, Christ is born. The raven asketh, *Quando?* When? The crow replieth, *Hoc nocte*, This night. The ox crieth out, *Ubi? ubi?* Where? where? The sheep bleateth out, *Bethlehem*, Bethlehem. A voice from Heaven sounded, 'Gloria in Excelsis'—Glory be on high. London: printed and sold by J. Bradford in Little Briton, the corner house, over against the pump, 1701. Price one penny." Hone's book was published in 1826, and he speaks of the fondness of the Welsh for carols at that date. He adds that formerly the Welsh folk "had carols adapted to most of the church festivals, and to the four seasons of the year, but in our times they are limited to that of Christmas." And he states further that, after the turn of midnight on Christmas Eve, service is performed in the churches, followed by the singing of carols to the harp.

There are two usages connected with Christmas Eve which, undoubtedly, have come down to us from heathen times. One of these is the well-known privilege connected with the misletoe. This plant, as everybody knows, was held in the greatest veneration by the Druids, especially when, as occasionally happened, it was found attached to the oak. The other is the burning of the Yule log. What is the derivation of "Yule"? is a question much discussed, but without any really satisfactory result. The Yule log was, no doubt, originally burnt as a sacrifice to Odin or Wodin, the father of Thor, according to Scandinavian

mythology. It was formerly the custom to put aside a partially burnt portion of the log, and to keep it till the following Christmas. Then the new log was lighted with remnants of the old one. Herrick refers to this when he sings :—

“ With the last year’s brand
Light the new block, and
For good success on his spending,
On your psalteries play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a-teending.”

Chambers¹ tells us that in Devonshire an “ Ashton fag-got ” takes the place of the Yule log. In Cornwall the Christmas log is known by the name of “ Mock.”

A belief was long current in Devon and Cornwall, and perhaps still lingers both there and in other remote parts of the country, that at midnight on Christmas Eve the cattle in their stalls fall down on their knees in adoration of the infant Saviour, in the same manner as legend reports them to have done in the stable at Bethlehem. Bees are also said to sing in their hives at the same time, and bread baked on Christmas Eve was supposed never to become mouldy. All nature was believed to unite in celebrating the birth of Christ, and to partake in the general joy which the anniversary of the Nativity inspired.

Hone, writing in the earlier part of the century, speaks of a curious custom in connection with carol singing which was, at that time, observed in the Isle of Thanet, and with which the Christmas festivities began. A party of young people procured the head of a dead horse, which was fixed to a pole about four feet in length. A string was tied to the lower jaw, and a horse-cloth was then attached to the whole, under which one of the party got, and, by pulling the string, kept up a loud snapping noise. The rest of the

¹ “ Book of Days,” ii., 736.

party, grotesquely habited, rang hand-bells. They thus went from house to house sounding their bells and singing carols and songs. They were commonly gratified with beer and cake, or perhaps with money. This was provincially called a "hodening, and the figure above described as a "hoden," or wooden horse. It was supposed to be an ancient relic of a festival ordained to commemorate our Saxon ancestors landing in that island.¹

A correspondent, whose letter appears in the same volume, states that, near the village of Raleigh, there is a valley said to have been caused by an earthquake several hundred years ago, which swallowed up a whole village together with the church. Formerly it was the custom for people to assemble in this valley on Christmas Day morning to listen to the ringing of the bells beneath them. This, it was positively asserted, might be heard by putting the ear to the ground and listening attentively. Even now (adds the writer) it is usual on Christmas morning for the old men and women to tell their young friends to go to the valley, stoop down, and hear the bells ring merrily.²

In his "Exeter Fifty Years Since," Mr. Cousins states that, at seven o'clock on Christmas Day, previous to morning prayers, the tune to the Hundredth Psalm was played on the cathedral organ, the chorister boys singing the words in the minstrel gallery, which was provided with candles. Hundreds of people attended, but, in consequence of the unruly conduct of parties who had accompanied the various choirs during the night singing anthems and carols (which was very general then), the dean and chapter put a stop to the custom.

At Hucknall Torkard in Nottinghamshire, until lately the children, who went about singing carols at Christmas, used to take with them a box in which was a doll decked

¹ "Every Day Book," vol. ii., p. 1643.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1650.

out. The custom had not been observed in other villages in the neighbourhood, at least in recent times. In the West Riding of Yorkshire the practice is very common.¹

A contributor to *Notes and Queries* in 1873 says that, when he was a boy, the colliers at Llwynymaen, two miles from Oswestry, were in the habit, during the evening of Christmas week, of carrying from house to house in the town boards covered with clay, in which were stuck lighted candles. This was done at Christmas, not at Candlemas, and only by the colliers. This was probably an ancient usage, and intended to indicate the birth of the "Light of the World."²

The *Cambrian Journal* of September, 1857, and "Tales and Traditions of Tenby," supply me with the following item.

On Christmas Day, at four o'clock in the morning, it was in past days customary at Tenby for the young men of the town to escort the rector with lighted torches from his house to the church. Extinguishing their torches in the porch, they went into the early service, and when it was ended the torches were re-lighted, and the procession returned to the rectory, the bells chiming till the time of the usual morning service. This custom in the Welsh districts is called Pylgain, or Plygain, which means "The Morning Light."

A lady at Swansea has informed me that at St. Peter's Church, Carmarthen, an early service used to be held on Christmas morning within the memory of persons now living. The church was lighted with coloured candles, carried thither on that occasion by the congregation. The early Christmas service was, I believe, held in many Welsh churches, but the name "Pylgain" which was given to it is now applied by the Welsh Wesleyans to their Watch Night services.

¹ *Notes and Queries*, December 22, 1877.

² *Ibid.*, December 13, 1873.

It was the custom at St. Asaph, Caerwys, at a house with which my informant was acquainted, for the fire to be made upon Christmas Eve, and a leg of beef to be put on to boil down for broth at eight o'clock. Then everybody went to bed, and rose at four or five to go to church for Plygain, which, in this instance, was the name given to carol singing. The clergyman sang the first carol (or, perhaps, the first verse of a carol) and the clerk the second. Then the carols were sung round the church in procession. This was over about seven. There were basins of hot broth for any who chose to come to the house in question—servants—their friends—and neighbours. This, my informant thinks, had been the usage in the house for a hundred years and more.

The Rev. J. Moore of Minsterley, Salop, tells me that old people there can remember it a universal custom not to light a fire on Christmas Day, except with fire borrowed from a neighbour's house.

About 1835, died the Rev. George Alderson, who had been for nearly sixty years rector of the out-of-the-way village of Birkin, Ferrybridge, Yorkshire. In his days it was the custom for the clerk to present the rector with a nosegay of flowers before the beginning of the morning service on Christmas Day. This nosegay the rector carried with him wherever he went, to desk, pulpit, or altar, during the service. It was a difficult matter, of course, to get flowers at that time of year, but the clerk always got enough to make a good bunch.

Until the last twenty or thirty years it was the custom for the choir to sing anthems and carols on the top of the church tower at Crondall, Hants. Mr. S. Cranstone, parish clerk, tells me that this was an old custom in the days of his grandfather.

Of customs connected with St. Stephen's Day (January 26) I can find very little record. In the north of England

it was known as "Wrenning Day," from the custom of stoning a wren to death in cruel commemoration of St. Stephen's martyrdom.

Holy Innocent's Day (January 28), also called "Childermas Day," has always had a veil of sorrow over it. In many places in olden time the *Gloria in Excelsis* was not used, nor the *Te Deum*, nor the *Gloria Patri*. The church colour was formerly black or violet. A trace of this still survives, or till recently did survive, in the custom of ringing a muffled peal on that day at Leigh-upon-Mendip, and at several other places which might be mentioned. Until a very recent period, remarks Dr. Neale, not only the day itself, but the same day in every week of the succeeding year, was considered highly unlucky. So the *Spectator* tells us of his superstitious hostess:—"As they began to talk of family affairs, a little boy at the lower end of the table told her that he was to go in to 'join hand' on Thursday. 'Thursday,' says she; 'no, child, if it pleases God, you shall not begin on Childermas Day. Tell your writing master that Friday will be soon enough.'"

It is said that the idea of the inauspicious nature of Childermas Day is still retained in some parts of England. Thus in Cornwall, housewives scrupulously refrain from scouring or scrubbing on December 28.

Very little account seems to have been taken in time past of the Festival of the Circumcision (January 1). The fact of its being coincident with New Year's Day has thrown it into obscurity. Apart from the wassailing with which the New Year was always ushered in by our forefathers, there is little or nothing to be noticed in connection with this Festival. It is not, I believe, unusual to ring a muffled peal on the death of the old year, and to remove the mufflers at midnight so as to salute the birth of the new year in joyous fashion. The Vicar of East Dereham, Norfolk, has told me that this is an old custom in his parish.

Almost the only distinctly religious ceremony connected with the Festival of the Epiphany was the offering on that day, by the Monarch, of gold, frankincense, and myrrh in imitation of the Magi. The form which this ceremony took a century ago was as follows:—The King, preceded by heralds, pursuivants, and the Knights of the Garter, Thistle, and Bath, in the collars of their respective Orders, went to the Royal Chapel of St. James, and offered gold, myrrh, and frankincense. Since the illness of George III., the procession, and even the personal appearance of the Monarch, have been discontinued. Two gentlemen from the Lord Chamberlain's office now appear instead, attended by one carrying a box ornamented at the top with a spangled star, from which they take the gifts above mentioned, and place them on an alms dish held forth by the officiating priest.

It was formerly the custom of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and the London Guilds to go to St. Paul's on Twelfth Day to hear a sermon. This was spoken of as an old custom in Queen Elizabeth's reign. When it was given up, and why, I am unable to discover.

A gentleman living in the neighbourhood has told me that at Aldborough, near Boroughbridge, in the West Riding, the Parish Feast is held on the Festival of the Epiphany. The ceremonial is peculiar. A number of villagers, farm labourers, etc., dress in an eccentric manner as shepherds, and parade the parish every here and there, executing quaint dances to the music of a concertina or a fiddle. They are preceded by a horn-blower, who, at intervals, sounds his instrument. Formerly they carried a doll dressed up in a fantastic way, and this, no doubt, was a relic of the Roman "Bambino." They also, until a few years ago, used to mount a set of stone steps which still exist on the village green. Then the best speaker among them called out the name of every man resident in Aldborough, proclaiming his besetting weakness, and

according to his popularity or otherwise, bestowing upon him a fanciful nickname. This became so very objectionable that the late Lord of the Manor put a stop to it. The quasi-shepherds still perambulate the parish with the horn and fiddle. The custom is one of great antiquity, and its origin is lost in obscurity, though it is quite evident that it was based upon a religious idea.

At Padstow in Cornwall it was the custom, so late as 1859, for the rustics to set up a pitcher at a convenient distance on the eve of the Conversion of St. Paul (January 25) and to throw stones at it. It was called "Paul's Pitcher Day." The pitcher was pelted until it was entirely demolished. Of course jollification and drinking succeeded the stone-throwing.

Evidently this custom was in commemoration of the part which St. Paul took in the martyrdom of St. Stephen, and the fact that it was observed on the eve of the Festival, and not on the day itself, gives it a special signification.

It must be left for weather-wise folk to judge of the truth of the remark of a Huntingdonshire rustic—"We shall have a fine spring because St. Paul's Day is fine." He was referring to the old adage :—

" If St. Paul be fair and clear,
Then betides a happy year."

On the eve of Candlemas (February 2) it was formerly the custom in Nottinghamshire to decorate both the churches and the houses with branches of box, and to light up a number of candles in the evening, as being the last day of the Christmas rejoicing. There is still a well-known saying :—

" On Candlemas Day
Throw candles away."

In connection with this Festival the old Latin proverb is well known:—

“ Si Sol splendescat Maria purificante,
Major erit glacies post festum quam fuit ante.”

A writer in the “County Almanac” for 1676, under “February,” has turned the saying into English on this wise:—

“ Foul weather is no news ; hail, rain, and snow
Are now expected, and esteemed no woe ;
Nay, ’tis an omen bad, the yeomen say,
If Phœbus shows his face the second day.”

It is said that in Cumberland the Festival of the Purification is known as “Coat-lap day.” To the meaning of this I can give no clue.

In years gone by, Candlemas was specially observed at the Temple Church and at Ripon. Mr. Walcot says that so late as 1790, on the Sunday before Candlemas Day, the Collegiate Church was one continued blaze of light all the afternoon, a vast number of candles being lighted.

We now come to Shrove Tuesday, and it is noticeable that in England it carries with it its distinctively religious name—*i.e.* the Tuesday for confession or shriving, as a preparation for the coming Lenten fast. This is the more striking when it is contrasted with the popular name given to the day in the three leading Roman Catholic countries on the Continent, Italy, Spain, and France. In each case the name by which it is commonly known has simply reference to the Carnival. The term *Mardi gras* is familiar to everybody. Strangely enough in Protestant Germany the day is commonly known as *Fastendienstag*, or Fast Tuesday—*i.e.*, I suppose, the Tuesday before the Fast.

We cannot, however, be surprised that most of the

customs which are connected with Shrove Tuesday should relate to its carnival character, and everybody recognises what is meant when they hear "pancake day" spoken of. But there are one or two Shrovetide usages which are not so familiar to the general public.

At Wellington in Shropshire there was, and perhaps still is, a custom for the children on Shrove Tuesday to meet in the churchyard and blow trumpets. These all joined hands and formed a ring round the outside of the church, and the trumpets were again blown.¹ A similar custom was followed, I believe, at Beckington, Somersetshire, not many years ago. More details relating to this curious usage have been given in an earlier part of this volume,² under the heading of "Clipping the Church."

A former vicar of Kirby Grindlerlyth, Yorkshire, has told me that, in his part of the East Riding, Shrove Tuesday is called "Ball Day," and the school-children expect a half-holiday on purpose to play at ball.

There is another odd name given to the day. It is said that at Eccleshall in Staffordshire Shrove Tuesday is called "Goodtet." It has been suggested that the word is a corruption of "Good Tide," *i.e.* holyday or festival. In "Halliwell's Archæological Dictionary" it is stated that the term "Good-day" is used in Staffordshire to signify a holy-day, and in the north "Gooddit" represents Shrovetide. In some places Shrove Tuesday is called "Goodies Tuesday," and "Good-time" is the common term to indicate a festival.³

The following is a fair specimen of a very widely spread usage on the morning of the day immediately preceding Lent—that of poor people or their children going from house

¹ *Notes and Queries*, March 18, and April 15, 1876.

² P. 19.

³ *Notes and Queries*, April 20, and May 18, 1850.

to house in their parishes, begging for contributions towards the customary feast or carnival.

It is, I believe, a traditional custom in the Isle of Wight for the children to go round their respective parishes on the morning of Shrove Tuesday, singing :—

“ Shroving, shroving, I am come a-shroving ;
White bread and apple pie,
My mouth is very dry,
I wish I were well awet,
As I could sing for a nut.

“ Shroving, shroving, I am come a-shroving,
A piece of bread, a piece of cheese,
A piece of your fat bacon ;
Dough nuts and pancakes,
All your own making.
Shroving, shroving,” etc.

We now come to Lent, and there are more indications that it was religiously observed by our forefathers than is generally supposed. During the reign of Elizabeth steps were taken officially to secure the fulfilment of the Church's rule of fasting. From Strype's "Annals" we learn that in 1560 a proclamation was put out at the beginning of Lent, that any butcher who killed animals for food during the season should be fined £20 for each time that he did so. Heylin, in his "History of the Reformation," written during this reign, speaks of the weekly fasts, the Embering weeks, together with the Fast of the Rogation, as being "severely kept" by a forbearance of all kind of flesh. He is careful to point out that this was not by virtue of the statute, as in the time of King Edward, but as appointed by the Church in her public Calendar before the Book of Common Prayer. The Queen seems to have been very strict in the matter of Lenten observance, and the people would be pretty sure to follow her lead. Of hersel.

we are told that she appointed some of the most noted of the clergy to preach before her on the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays during Lent, and that she always wore black when she went to hear them, "according to the commendable custom of her predecessors."

With a rule so rigid as that noticed above, it was necessary, from charitable considerations, to make certain exceptions in favour of the aged and infirm; and such exceptions prove the rule. Strype, in his life of Parker, states that certain dispensations were granted upon reasonable causes. Thus he cites the case of John Foxe, the martyrologist, a spare, sickly man, whom the Archbishop permitted to eat meat in Lent because of his "bad stomach." Applications for dispensation had to be made, accompanied by a physician's certificate. If the doctors were not more worthy of credit than the "martyrologist," such certificates could not have been worth much. We are, however, told that the Primate refused more of these applications than he accepted, which showed that he had no great faith in the vouchers.

Archbishop Whitgift (1601), again, was very strict in this matter of Lent, but, in consideration for sick and infirm persons, a few butchers had license to kill beasts for meat during the annual fast; but the permission extended only to such meat as was fitted for sickly persons to eat. Of course the butchers took liberties, and exceeded the terms of the archiepiscopal permission, and they were threatened with trouble about it with the Mayor of Canterbury.

It was but natural that the strictness of Lenten observance, as it existed in Queen Elizabeth's reign, should, as time went on, become relaxed. There was, however, a good deal of earnestness among the better class of the clergy in favour of Lenten abstinence during the reigns of William and Anne. John Wesley, for instance, was strong upon

the matter, for whatever his modern so-called followers may say, he sympathised with High Churchmanship, and was most anxious that the Church's rules should be carried out.

Mr. Abbey calls attention to a paper of Steele's in the *Guardian*, especially addressed, in Lent, 1713, to careless men of pleasure, and begs them not to ridicule a season set apart for humiliation. Even during the dark days of the last century, a certain respect was shown to Lent as a specially solemn time. Mr. Walcot tells us that, at Rochester Cathedral, "the choir was silent on Litany days in Lent;" and even people of fashion, though they perhaps would not entirely forego their pleasures during the sacred season, paid a certain respect to it by wearing mourning when they went to the theatre, and the ordinary levities of society were distinctly toned down. In the earlier part of the present century it was considered the correct thing for ladies, during the forty days, to put on a more sombre garb than they usually wore. Mr. Chatterton Dix tells me that, until late years, the churches in Bristol were hung with black during Lent, and that the Cathedral has been similarly treated since its restoration. At York Minster the choir-boys wore black gowns instead of surplices during Advent and Lent; and a writer in *Notes and Queries* of April 20, 1872, stated that, fifty years previous to that date, it was the custom for the "Protestant Episcopal" clergymen in Philadelphia to lay aside the surplice, and to assume the black gown for prayers as well as for preaching.

Mid-Lent, or the fourth Sunday in Lent, has for long been known as "Mothering Sunday." This name arose from the practice of young people, after they had left home for service, getting a holyday in the middle of Lent in order to pay a visit to their parents. They generally took with them some small gift or trifling delicacy. Amongst these latter a favourite one was a "Simmel Cake," which in ap-

pearance was something like a raised pork pie, and it had in it a mixture of rich materials, after the nature of a plum cake. Concerning these Herrick sings :—

“ I'll to thee a Simnel bring,
'Gainst thou go a'mothering ;
So that when she blesses thee,
Half that blessing thou'lt give me.”

These simnels were chiefly used in Herefordshire and Shropshire, I believe. The meaning of the word “ Simnel ” has been much disputed. In Gloucestershire “ Mothering Cakes ” are still common. At Cheltenham they were, and perhaps still are, made something after the fashion of mince-pies.

“ Fig-pie Wake ” is kept at Draycott-le-Moors in Staffordshire on Mid-Lent Sunday. The pies are made of dried figs, sugar, treacle, spice, etc. They are rather luscious for those who are not to the manner born. On this Sunday the friends of the parishioners come to visit them, and to eat the fig-pies. In parts of Oxfordshire figs are eaten on Palm Sunday in remembrance, it may be, of the fig-tree without fruit which was cursed for its barrenness. It is believed that this custom dates from the times when the Church did not allow meat to be eaten, even on the Sundays in Lent, and fig-pies were served up as the richest food available.

At Usk in Monmouthshire the custom of “ Mothering ” on Mid-Lent Sunday is so scrupulously observed that the aspect of the congregation on that day is, the vicar tells me, very curious, as so many familiar faces are absent, and so many strange faces take their place.

In the north, more particularly in Cumberland, Passion Sunday, or the fifth Sunday in Lent, is called “ Carling Sunday,” from the custom of having a sort of pea, called a

“Carling Nut,” steeped and fried in butter. A kind of pancake is made of these, and is eaten with pepper and salt. The children are accustomed to count the Sundays from the fourth Sunday in Lent to Easter by the following couplet :—

“Tid-Mid, Misera,
Carlings, Palms, Pace Egg Day.”

“Tid-mid ” means, I presume, mid-tide, or the middle of Lent, and “Pace Egg,” of course, signifies Easter.

I am told that it is esteemed the correct thing to eat carlings between meals, and to let the children have some of the dry nuts to play with on Carling Sunday.

There was a very curious custom observed on Palm Sunday at Sellack Church, Herefordshire, within the last hundred years. On that day one of the churchwardens came round and presented to the clergyman first, and then to each member of the congregation in his seat, a small bun, and his son followed immediately after him with a horn of cider for each person. At the presentation of each the words “Peace and good neighbourhood” were said, and the bun and cider were then consumed by each person before leaving the church.

The Caistor “Gad-whip” custom has been so often described that any mention of it would seem almost superfluous. However, it would not be right to omit it entirely when dealing with Palm Sunday usages.

Briefly put, it may be described as follows :—Every Palm Sunday a man, representing the proprietor of the Broughton estate, comes into Caistor Church porch while the First Lesson is being read and cracks what is called a “Gad-whip” three times. He then enters the church, and takes his place there among the congregation. During the Second Lesson he goes up to the clergyman holding the whip upright. Tied to it is a bag containing thirty pieces

of silver. He then kneels down before the clergyman, and waves the whip three times round his head, and continues kneeling till the end of the Lesson. He then retires.

These are the terms upon which the Broughton property is held. The thirty pieces of silver, of course, have reference to the sum of money for which Judas betrayed our Lord. I must refer my readers to the many descriptions of this curious custom, which have been published, for an explanation of the ceremony.

Near Avebury in Wiltshire is a mound called Silbury Hill. It is an old custom for the people to climb this hill on Palm Sunday to eat fig cakes and drink sugar and water, the latter brought from the Swallow Head, or spring of the river below.¹

At St. Julian's, Shrewsbury, it was formerly the custom to use simply muscadine wine for the Holy Communion on all days except Palm Sunday, on which occasion a "pottle of claret" was used, in addition to the muscadine. This information is extracted from the churchwarden's accounts of that parish in 1622.² No doubt this mixture was intended to symbolise the draught of wine mingled with vinegar, which was offered to our Blessed Lord at the Crucifixion.

A late incumbent of Minsterley, Salop, told me that on Palm Sunday, fifty or sixty years ago, the people used to turn out to Pontesford Hill, a prominent eminence in that part, for the purpose of finding the golden arrow. I have no clue to the meaning of this. At Minsterley, Palm Sunday has always been marked by the church being decorated with willow branches. These, I presume, were supposed to be the nearest approach to palms which could be obtained.

In various parts of the county of Durham it was the

¹ *Notes and Queries*, March 31, 1877.

² *Ibid.*, October 13, 1883.

custom within living memory for the people to make willow crosses for Palm Sunday. The early catkins were made to form the extremities of the arms of the cross. They were tied with blue or pink ribbon, with bows here and there, and were often very tasteful and pretty.

At Winchester and in the neighbourhood there is, or was, an idea that from whatever quarter the wind blows on Palm Sunday, it will continue to blow from that same quarter (for the most part) during the year.¹

Kendal would not seem to be exactly the place for anyone to choose if he wished to spend a quiet Maundy Thursday. It is customary there, as I am told, for parties of half a dozen or so little boys and girls to get each an old tin can, and to tie a string to it. One of each group starts off with it at a good pace trailing the can after him, and the others run behind striking the can with sticks, and singing,—

“Trot hearen, trot horn,
Good Friday, la morn,”

whatever that may mean. They continue this until the can is knocked to pieces.

The distinctive ceremonial, peculiar to Maundy Thursday, was that of people of exalted social position humbling themselves, as was supposed, by washing the feet of poor folk on that day. This custom dates from very early times, and it was doubtless intended as a suitable preparation for Good Friday, and was an imitation of the act of our Blessed Lord in washing the feet of His disciples as related in St. John xiii., with especial reference to the fourteenth verse, where we read Christ's words: “If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet.” It was formerly the custom in England for the King on Maundy Thursday

¹ *Notes and Queries*, April 6, 1850.

to wash with his own hands the feet of as many poor men as he was years old. After this, food and money were given them. This ceremony was performed at Greenwich by Queen Elizabeth when she was thirty-nine years of age. Chambers tells us that she was attended by thirty-nine ladies, and that thirty-nine poor persons had first their feet washed by the yeomen of the laundry with warm water and sweet herbs; afterwards by the sub-almoner, and lastly by the Queen herself kneeling. These various persons—the yeomen, the sub-almoner, and the Queen—after washing each foot, marked it with the sign of the Cross above the toes, and kissed it. Clothes, victuals, and money were then distributed. James II. was the last English King who carried out this ceremony in its entirety.

William III., as a sound Protestant, preferred to do this sort of thing by deputy, and left the washing to his almoner, and thus the pious custom in its old form died out. On Maundy Thursday, 1731, George II. was forty-eight years old, and forty-eight poor men, and a like number of poor women, had food distributed to them in the Banqueting House, Whitehall. The donation was curious enough as regards the variety of eatables. There were boiled beef, shoulders of mutton, and small bowls of ale. This was called dinner. After that, large wooden platters of fish and loaves; one old large ling, and one large dried cod; twelve red herrings and twelve white herrings, and four half-quartern loaves. Each person had one platter of this provision—not a very bountiful supply when it had to be divided among ninety-six poor people—but the first two Georges were not remarkable for their generosity. The poor folk fared better when the distribution of clothes and money took place. They received shoes, stockings, and leather bags, with penny, twopenny, and fourpenny pieces of silver, and shillings. It is said that each had altogether about £4 in value. In this reign the Lord High Almoner officiated at

the feet-washing in place of the King. The washing ceremony has long been given up, and since the beginning of the present reign additional money has been bestowed in place of provisions.

At Exeter, on Maundy Thursday, as a friend who was formerly a choir boy at the Cathedral tells me, the vergers used to take into the close "maunds" or baskets filled with coppers. The hundreds of children who collected together on the occasion formed themselves into some sort of order, and money was given into the hands of those in front, and the rest was scattered loosely among those behind to be scrambled for.

We now come to Good Friday. I am told that at Tenby in Pembrokeshire, so late as the end of the last century the old people were in the habit of walking barefooted to church on that day. This custom could be traced back to very ancient times.

It was also usual in that neighbourhood for young persons to meet together in Holy Week, and to "make Christ's bed." This was done by gathering a quantity of long reed leaves from the river, and weaving them into the shape of a man. They then laid the figure on a wooden cross, and placed it in a retired part of a field or garden, where they left it.

Some years ago I met with the following paragraph in the *City Press*:—

"On Good Friday morning, at the Church of All Hal lows, Lombard Street, according to a custom which has been observed for the last 287 years, sixty of the younger boys from Christ's Hospital attended the service, after which, in accordance with the will of Peter Symonds, made in 1503, they each received at the hands of the churchwarden, Mr. Shayer, a new penny and a packet of raisins. The same will also directs that the clerk and sexton shall

receive sixpence each, the Rector of Chadwell, Essex, twenty shillings, and the poor of the parish and ward, and the Sunday school children, sixpence each. There was a large attendance at the service.

"A very ancient custom was again observed at St. Bartholemew the Great, Smithfield. At the conclusion of the service an old tomb in the churchyard was visited, a procession being formed, when the Rev. J. Morgan laid twenty-one sixpences on the tomb, which were picked up by twenty-one elderly females of the parish. It is stated that an old lady left this benefaction, and that she lies buried in the churchyard, but the exact spot cannot be pointed out."

A writer in the *Daily Telegraph* of March 28, 1891, supplies a little additional information as regards All Hallows, which is useful as illustrating the action now so commonly taken by the "Charity Commissioners." He says:—"Yesterday (Good Friday), owing to the action of the Charity Commissioners, the bequest was fulfilled for the last time. A full congregation attended the morning service, and the front pews were occupied by sixty of the youngest Bluecoat boys. At the close of the service the boys filed to the chancel in front of the Communion rails, and Canon Rawlinson, the rector, handed to each a new penny, while the churchwardens added a paper of 'good raisons,' with a bun, an orange, and an Easter card. Peter Symonds devised the sum of 3s. 4d. to provide for the 'raisons,' and he ordered a donation of 30s. to Christ's Hospital to be set aside from the annuity of £3 2s. 8d. payable to the churchwardens, who are entitled to 2s. for their 'paines.' All Hallows, Lombard Street, has lost £3,600 of its former revenue under the Charity Commissioners' scheme, and yesterday an offertory had to be taken to meet the current expenses of the church."

The Rector of Stoke Edith in Herefordshire, writing in 1873, stated that he was told by an old woman in Ledbury,

that an aunt of hers who lived at Bosbury, about four miles off, and who died in 1872, used always on Good Friday to put on a white apron with a large bow behind, and never had anything to eat until she came back from church. He further adds that the late Archdeacon Evans told him that in his college days at Cambridge no meat could be had from the kitchen at Trinity until the afternoon—three o'clock, he believed.

In the days of our grandfathers, or great grandfathers, I have reason to believe that the religious observance of the Good Friday fast was not so uncommon as people are apt to suppose. Take the following as a typical instance:—A lady tells me that her grandfather, who was Rector of St. Asaph, Caerwys, when he married, went to live in the house which his wife's family had occupied for more than a hundred years. There, on Good Friday, the dinner consisted of pikelets or pancakes, made of flour, yeast, milk, and water, but no eggs. This was cooked on a "bake-stone." No meat was provided, but potatoes formed part of the meal.

One is naturally glad to hear of labouring people attending to a Church rule of the kind we are considering. I have an account of an old woman living in a parish near Wolverhampton, who was not in other respects very particular about her religious duties. On one Maundy Thursday she had some meat given to her, but she said that she should keep it till the Saturday, as she had never eaten meat on Good Friday. It is believed that this feeling is very general in the parish where the old woman lived.

To turn to another way in which Good Friday was marked in some other places. Years ago the clergy of the ancient Collegiate Church of St. Mary, Youghal, County Cork, always officiated in black gown and hood on Good Friday. Possibly the practice may still be continued.¹

¹ *Notes and Queries*, May 11, 1872.

Even the sacredness and solemn character of this day has not preserved it from what strict Church people would regard as desecration. I find that in Sussex, people who do not play at marbles at any other time do so on Good Friday. On that day they play as much as possible. They will play in the road at the church gates till the moment before service, and begin again as soon as the service is over. The marble season in Sussex is between Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.¹ The same custom, I understand, prevails in some parts of Essex, and the day is called "Marble Day."

A very odd custom prevailed at Glenthams in Lincolnshire until the early part of the present century. There is in the church there a tomb with a figure, popularly called "Molly Grime." This figure was regularly washed every Good Friday by seven aged maidens of Glenthams, with water brought from Newell Well; each receiving a shilling for her trouble. This was in consequence of an old bequest connected with some property in that district. About 1832 the property was sold without any reference to the custom which had been attached to it, and the Molly Grime washing was discontinued.

It will be remembered that among the Palm Sunday customs I quoted from the churchwardens' accounts in the parish of St. Julian, Shrewsbury. In the same document there is a most astonishing item to the effect that on Easter Day, 1622, there was a celebration of the Holy Communion at "Morninge Prayer," and another at the "hie service," when thirteen quarts of muscadine were consumed! Well instructed church folk, who are accustomed to take only a few drops from the chalice, may perhaps be aware that in many country places rustic communicants, who have not been taught better, are in the habit of taking enough of the consecrated Wine to half fill a small wine glass; but

¹ *Notes and Queries*, July 5, 1879.

the idea of more than three gallons of the consecrated Species being consumed in one day by the communicants of a parish which even now does not reckon more than two thousand inhabitants, reveals a dreadful state of things.

It seems only natural that at such a time of festivity as Easter the customs attaching to the season took a secular rather than a religious form. Indeed, I know of none which were distinctively religious unless the following may be so regarded.

From the Rev. J. Burleigh Colvill I understand that when he was in charge of the parish of Hewelsfield in the Forest of Dean, the churchwardens were wont to present to him, as he entered the church, two bouquets of flowers. One of these was to be placed on the altar, and the other was to be worn by the officiant.

I believe that in days long gone by it was the custom in many places to have a celebration of the Holy Communion very early on Easter morning. Thus at Usk in Monmouthshire, I understand that such a service at six o'clock on the morning of that day is quite a time-honoured custom.

One way in which our forefathers were accustomed to distinguish Easter Day as a special festival was by donning new clothes on that morning as a regular thing. A gentleman has told me that an ancestor of his who lived at the beginning of the last century always put on all her jewels on Easter Day. It is not likely that this was a mere private fancy of a religious woman. The probability is that she was simply following in the matter the general custom of ladies of her own rank at that date.

A clergyman has told me that when he was at Hawkchurch in Dorsetshire it was the custom for the parish clerk to make and take round on Easter Day to the houses of the principal inhabitants cakes made of flour, butter, and currants, and powdered with sugar. It need scarcely be

said these were sold at remunerative rates, and it was considered quite a wrong thing for any "respectable" family to be without them on Easter Day. A lady tells me that this was also the custom in the parish of St. Mary Magdalene, Taunton.

Hasted, in his "History of Kent" (1790), states that in the parish of Biddenden there is an endowment of old but unknown date for making a distribution of cakes amongst the poor every Easter Day in the afternoon. The source of the benefaction consists in twenty acres of land in five parcels commonly called "Bread and Cheese Land." Practically, in Mr. Hasted's time, six hundred cakes were thus disposed of, being given to persons who attended service, while two hundred and seventy loaves of three and a half pounds weight each, with a pound and a half of cheese, were given in addition to such as were parishioners.

In the earlier part of the present century a curious custom prevailed in Birmingham. On Easter Monday any woman caught in the streets unprotected was liable to be lifted, or "heaved," as it was called, by any party of men whom she met, and she was not allowed to go free without paying a forfeit. The plan was for two of the men to clasp each other's wrists, and to make the victim sit upon their joined arms. They then lifted her up and down two or three times, and carried her a little way down the street. On Easter Tuesday the women were wont to retaliate upon the men in a similar fashion. Possibly this usage may originally have had some symbolical reference to the Resurrection. The popular idea was that the "heaving" was a pretended test as to how Lent had been observed by the patient. This custom used to prevail in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire, as well as in Warwickshire. I have seen it stated that in Durham the men on Easter Monday used to claim the right to take off the women's shoes, and that on Easter Tuesday the women retaliated.

The custom of giving away eggs, hard-boiled and fancifully coloured, at Easter, is too well known to need more than a passing notice. However, probably some of those who give or receive them think little of the religious signification of the custom, and how remarkable a type of the Resurrection is a chick coming from an egg.

May is the month wherein nature breaks out into renewed beauty, and has, almost from time immemorial, been connected with joviality and lightness of heart. The ancient festival of the goddess Flora was held on or about the first of May, and it has been supposed that the pretty rustic custom of choosing a "Queen of the May" originated from the heathen commemoration. In olden times when Rome, as a Christian Church, was in the ascendant, May was the month kept in honour of the Blessed Virgin. When I was living at Teignmouth in South Devon a good many years ago, it was usual for the children to go about from house to house on May-day exhibiting a doll gaily dressed, and surrounded with flowers. The doll was carried in a box or a basket. These, I have no doubt, was originally intended to represent the Virgin Mary; they now go by the somewhat debased name of "May Babies."

This custom is not peculiar to Devonshire. I find that in Essex these dolls are or were carried about on May-day, and, if I mistake not, also at Hitchin in Hertfordshire, and probably at many other places. Thus the late Colonel Bagnall, when churchwarden at West Bromwich, told me that in that town the children, on May-day, bring round garlands, decorated sticks and dolls in a bower adorned with flowers.

It may not be generally known that the church of St. Andrew Undershaft, in the city of London, received its name from the exceptionally lofty May-pole which was annually set up in the street in front of the church, and to which Chaucer refers when he speaks of "the great shaft

of Cornhill." It was higher than the church steeple, and was destroyed by the Puritans as tending to minister to the cheerfulness and amusement of the parishioners and the people generally. This destruction necessarily brings to one's mind the caustic sarcasm of Lord Macaulay, who says that the Puritans set their faces against bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.

Rogation Tide comes next in order. It need scarcely be said that the Rogation Days are the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day, or Holy Thursday. The custom of having religious processions and other observances on these days is a very ancient one, and can be traced back to the middle of the fifth century. In the northern counties they are called "Gangen Days," from the Anglo-Saxon word "Gangen" to go. The observance of these days was twofold in its character, and was partly religious and partly secular. Regarded religiously, the perambulation of the parish by the clergy, choir, and people was for the purpose of invoking God's blessing upon the rising crops, during which procession Psalm ciii. was sung, and other devotions were introduced. In the interests of justice this perambulation was utilised for the purpose of keeping up in the minds of the parishioners the exact limits of the parish boundaries. To this end such sentences as "Cursed is he that translateth the bounds of his neighbour" formed part of the service.

The true purpose of the Rogation Tide procession is well expressed by George Herbert in his "Country Parson," published in 1652, thus:—

"The country parson is a lover of old customs if they be good and harmless. Particularly he loves procession, and maintains it, because there are contained therein four

manifold advantages. (1) A blessing of God for the fruits of the field; (2) Justice in the preservation of bounds; (3) Charitie in loving, walking, and neighbourly accompanying one another, with reconciling of differences at that time, if there be any; (4) Mercy in relieving the poor by a liberal distribution or largess, which at that time is or ought to be used. Therefore he exacts of all to be present at the perambulation, and those that withdraw and sever themselves from it he mislikes and reproves as uncharitable and unneighbourly, and if they will not reform, presents them."

An account of a partially religious Rogation procession in the early part of this century can scarcely fail to be interesting. The Vicar of Burpham, near Arundel, has been good enough to send me the following extract from his parish books. The intermingling of Bible reading and drinking is odd enough. It is evident that there was a feeling that a Rogation Tide procession ought to have some sort of religious element connected with it, but neither parson nor people knew what it ought to be. Here is the recorded account:—

"An exact account of the procession or bound-treading of the parish of Burpham as the bounds were set out and perambulated on the 29th of March, 1810, by the undersigned.

"On Tuesday, in Rogation Week, the minister, churchwardens, and other inhabitants of the said parish of Burpham, met in the church, and from thence went to the chalk pit in Burpham Slipe, and over the river round Burpham brooks, and then crossed the river again at Pepperling Slipe, and so to the malthouse, where upon a bank near the said malthouse they made a cross and a bound, and the minister read the Epistle and Gospel, and

Great Peppering brought two gallons of ale and a cake and a cheese, and Little Peppering one gallon of ale and a cake and a cheese.

“From thence they went round Peppering brooks and meads to a sluice upon the boundary ditch, and so along to the Whapple gate which goes into Stoke fields, and then under the hedge to the corner of it, and there they make a cross and a bound, and so round the Downs at the end of a ditch upon the road, and there they make a cross and a bound, and then go round the greater part of Coome Farm till they come to a lane between Lee farm-house and Coome House, and there they make a cross and a bound, and the minister reads again, and Coome Farm brings about eight or ten gallons of ale, and a two-gallon loaf of bread, and a cheese, and a cake of two gallons. After this they go along the lane and ascend the hill, and at the place where Coome Downs join Wepham Downs, they make a cross and a bound, and from thence they walk along the road to the corner of Heyward’s coppice, where they make a cross and a bound under the hedge, and after this they make their perambulation between Burpham and Augmering parishes to Wepham Ball, and then they go round the Ball to an old ash tree which stands in Mr. Cheal’s coppice, which they strip on the east side, and from this tree they go directly south to the Lady’s coppice, and then by the maple stem in the hedge they throw up a heap of stones, and from this maple stem they go along the ditch between Lady’s coppice and Well coppice to the corner of Blakehurst field, where they make a cross and a bound, and from thence they surround all the woods, and the Burpham four acres to the corner of Candle-croft, where in the lane near the gate they make a cross and a bound, and the minister reads again, and to this place, John Knowles, Wepham Farm, sends a gallon loaf, and a gallon cake, and cheese, and six gallons of ale. From this place they

descend Warning-Camp Downs, and encompass the Vinell to a croft called ———, and from thence round the Hoe and Wepham meads and brooks, and about the middle of the hill to the river, and by the river-side to the chalk pit, where they set out, and from thence to the walnut tree in Burpham Street, where all the freeholders and copyholders bring a gallon of ale, and a cake, and cheese, unless it be the farm of John Knowles, who paid his custom at Candlecroft, and so ends the procession.

“I certify that I went the bounds with the persons undersigned on the day and year above mentioned.

“Witness my hand.

“Wm. W. Holland, Vicar of Burpham.

Dennet Harvee, }
John Puckeridge, } Churchwardens.

The mark of X Richard Rafford—Parish Clerk.

Francis Stedman.

Thomas Port.

Joseph Page, }
Peter Page, } Boys.
Wm. West, }
John Puckeridge, Jun, }
Wm. Puckeridge, }
James Puckeridge, }

Witnesses of the due observance of the above customs.

Dennett Hersea. }
John Puckeridge. } Churchwardens.”

It is rather noticeable in looking down this list of signatories, that the parish clerk was the only one who was unable to write his name.

Of course we know not how many persons in addition to the above-named took part in the procession, but probably not very many, for the parish is quite a small one, and in 1841, the earliest record that I have, the population was only 280, and, at least, two-thirds of these would, I presume, be women and children. Supposing that we

estimate the freeholders and copyholders at Burpham Street as four, and those at Wepham Cross as two only, we arrive at this interesting total as regards the refreshment provided—twenty-three gallons of ale, several gallons of bread and cake, and an unknown quantity of cheese—a fairly liberal allowance!

By the injunctions of Elizabeth, it was required that in order to retain the perambulation of the circuits of parishes, the people should, once in the year, at the time accustomed, with the curate and substantial men of the parish, walk about the parishes as they were accustomed, and at their return to the church make their common prayers. And the curate in these perambulations was at certain convenient places to admonish the people to give thanks to God as they beheld His benefits, and for the increase and abundance of the fruits upon the face of the earth. The 103rd and 104th Psalms were appointed to be said on these occasions, and the minister was to inculcate such sentences as these:—"Cursed is he that translateth the bounds or doles of his neighbour." A sermon or homily of thanksgiving was to follow, and divine service said in church.

Eating and drinking always seems to have been an important item in connection with Rogation Tide processions. In some parishes we find that certain moneys were bequeathed by former residents towards the refreshment of those who took part in them. Thus in the parish of Edgcott in Buckinghamshire there is about an acre of land, let at £3 a year, called "Gang Monsay Land," which was left to the parish officers to provide cakes and beer for those who took part in the annual perambulation of the parish. At Clifton Reynes, in the same county, a bequest of land for a similar purpose directs that one small loaf, a piece of cheese, and a pint of ale, should be given to every married person, and half a pint of ale to every unmarried

person, resident in Clifton, when they walked the parish boundaries in Rogation Week. A certain estate at Harborne Crawley in Bedfordshire has to pay £4 on Rogation Day once in seven years, to defray the expense of perambulating and keeping up the boundaries of the parish.¹

It is much to be wished that the Rogation processions conducted on the old religious model were reintroduced, at least in our country parishes. This might easily be brought about if our Primate, as Archbishop Secker did in 1750, would urge his clergy to revert to the old practice such as was in use in Queen Elizabeth's reign. It may be well to state that, at Wolverhampton, until about 1765, the sacrist, resident prebendaries, and members of the choir assembled at morning prayer on Monday and Tuesday in Rogation Week, with charity children bearing long poles clothed with all sorts of flowers then in season, which were afterwards carried through the streets with much solemnity; the clergy, singing men and boys, in their church vestments, closing the procession and chanting the "Benedicite." The boundaries of the parish were marked in many places by "gospel trees." These were the spots where the Gospel was read during the function.

It is to be feared that, in the past, Ascension Day, or "Holy Thursday," has been greatly neglected, but there are not wanting evidences that a desire existed for a more reverent commemoration of the great event which forms an article in our Creed. Thus the rector has told me that the will of Sylvanus Lysons (who left certain lands in trust for charitable purposes) provides that there shall be service in Hemsted Church, Gloucestershire, on Ascension Day, with a celebration of Holy Communion. A guinea to the officiating clergyman, with a fee to the clerk, is paid from the funds of the "Lyson's charity."

¹ "Book of Days," I. 583.

For some reason or another, the element of water seems to be mixed up with Ascension Day local customs. Thus "Cuthbert Bede" writes:—"A Warwickshire cook of a relative of mine was seen last Ascension Day, May 1, standing out of doors, basin in hand, to catch the rain that was falling. In explanation she said that Holy Thursday water was holy water, and came straight from Heaven. The reason why she preserved it was that it was good for weak or sore eyes."

Witness, again, a custom which was usual some years ago in the town of Cowbridge in Glamorganshire on Ascension Day. The children formed parties, each being provided with sugar and a cup. Water was then taken from one of the wells in the neighbourhood, the "Bowman's" Well being an especial favourite, and the sugar put into it. This water was then drunk. The day was usually designated "Sugar and Water Day." I believe that this custom is observed in other places, but I have no idea what its meaning can be.

The ancient custom of well-dressing, as at Tissington, Derbyshire, took place on Ascension Day. The ceremony is full of interest, and I purpose giving an account of it in due course.

I cannot close these notices about Ascension Day customs without saying that Mr. Mackenzie Walcot, in his *Sacred Archæology*, states that at St. Magnus, in the city of London, the clergy on this day are presented with ribbons, silks, and stay-laces. If it is difficult to understand what connection there can be between Water and Holy Thursday, it is still more puzzling to discover what these above-named articles can have to do with the festival.

We come to Whitsun Tide, the characteristic observance of which in former times consisted in the holding of "Church Ales," which has been already described in these

papers. There are, however, one or two local customs which must be noticed.

From an early date the householders of St. Briavels, near Coleford, Gloucestershire, have had the privilege of cutting down the underwood and of pasturing cattle and sheep on a tract of land of about 1,200 acres, called "Halknall," or some such name. It is said that a penny a year was formerly paid to the churchwardens—I presume from those who used the land—and that this money was expended in the purchase of bread and cheese to be distributed in the church on Whitsun Day. This payment has long fallen into disuse, and the distribution of bread and cheese, no doubt, originally given to the poorer worshippers, degenerated to a mere scramble, and the church was sadly desecrated. In modern times, as I am informed, the stalest bread and the hardest "skim cheese" was bought and cut into small squares. Of course I am now describing what took place a great many years ago, though I call them, comparatively speaking, modern times. These portions of bread and cheese were brought into the church in baskets, and immediately after the afternoon service were thrown all over the church. Numbers of rough people came from the Forest of Dean for the frolic, and the evening was commonly passed in drinking and riot. Some twenty or more years ago the practice of throwing the bread and cheese about the church was discontinued, and they were thrown down from the church tower, and scrambled for in the churchyard. Of late years, says a friend, writing in 1880, the distribution took place outside the churchyard gates, in the road. For the last few years the custom has been dying out, and it ceased in 1879. It is to be hoped that it never will be revived, as its original signification has been entirely lost.

Several communications have been addressed to me, drawing attention to the fact that it has been an imme-

morial custom in some parishes to decorate the church with boughs or sprigs of birch on Whitsun Day. What connection "The Lady of the Woods," as Coleridge styles the graceful birch-tree, can have to do with Whitsun Tide, will probably be a puzzle to many; but I think that a reason can be found without looking very far. All those who are versed in what may be called "Tree Lore," must be aware that one of the peculiarities of the birch is its more than ordinary power of resisting decay. This attribute of durability is in an especial degree possessed by its bark. This has been proved by the fact that portions of birch bark have been found uninjured at considerable depths in peat bogs, where it must have lain for centuries. The symbolism is obvious, but I do not remember having ever seen it noticed.

I have but few customs to note as connected with special days during the Trinity season; the following, however, may fitly be mentioned.

In some districts in the West Riding of Yorkshire the Sunday following June 28 is called "Thump Sunday." It is usual on that day for people to visit their friends, and to eat spiced cake and cheese.¹

"Crack Nut" seems an odd name to give to a Sunday, but in a modern handbook of Kingston on Thames it is stated that until a recent period the congregation at the parish church used to crack nuts during service time on the Sunday next before the eve of Michaelmas Day. The day was known as "Crack Nut Sunday," and the custom was practised alike by young and old.

Forty years ago it was still the custom in the parishes of Cuckfield and Hurstpierpoint in Sussex to observe St. Crispin's Day (October 25), and it was kept with much rejoicing. The boys went round asking for money in the name of St. Crispin, bonfires were lighted, and the day

¹ *Notes and Queries*, July 1, 1876.

passed off very much in the same way as the fifth of November does amongst ourselves.

Miss C. M. Yonge, writing from Otterbourne, Winchester, has told me that in that part of Hampshire blacksmiths explode gunpowder on their anvils on St. Clement's Day (November 23). She has heard the reports when at Otterbourne, and more recently at Hursley, but the custom is pretty nearly given up.

At Ripon Minster, on or about St. Clement's Day, the choristers used to go round the church offering a rosy-cheeked apple, with a sprig of box stuck into it, to every person present, for which a small gratuity was expected, and, of course, generally given.

As recently as forty years ago the village children in Shropshire were accustomed on All Souls' Day (November 2) to go round to all their neighbours, "souling," as they termed it, collecting small contributions, and singing a doggerel song; of which the first stanza will be enough to quote:—

“ Soul, soul, for a soul cake ;
Pray, good mistress, for a soul cake,
One for Peter, two for Paul,
Three for them that made us all.”

The soul cake referred to in the verses was a sort of bun which people were in the habit of making to give to one another on All Souls' Day.

In the neighbourhood of Sandback in Cheshire, "souling" was formerly carried on with great zeal and energy on November 2. It was, I understand, commonly believed there that it was a remnant of the ancient custom for collecting money for masses for the dead.

CHAPTER XII.

CHURCH MUSIC.

WE will now pass on to consider a few customs connected with church music in past times. Doubtless a good deal could be unearthed respecting it, but only a little, comparatively speaking, have I come across in the course of my reading.

It is probable that church music was at its lowest ebb in the days of the early Georges. From the time of the Commonwealth it had been going down. The cheerfulness which music was calculated to give to the services of the church would naturally cause it to be viewed with disfavour by the Puritans, and many church organs were destroyed while they were in the ascendant, but after the Restoration they were gradually re-introduced, notwithstanding a great deal of popular prejudice which existed against them.

It was in cathedrals, of course, that the musical part of divine service was most efficiently rendered, but even in them things were often far from satisfactory. What could be expected of places like Carlisle which were presided over by Puritan bishops, like Barnabas Potter (1629-1642), who is reported to have said that an organ would blow him out of church. The instruments employed seem to have been very various. Mr. Walcot tells us that viols were used at Exeter, musical instruments at Lincoln in 1631, and the lyre and harp at Hereford. Cornets and

sackbuts were played at Worcester at the reception of Elizabeth, August 13, 1575, and in 1667 cornets were used at Westminster.¹ Occasionally we hear even in bad times of some effort having been made to render the service of God more dignified than was common in those days. Thus at the beginning of the eighteenth century the *Te Deum* was sung in Durham Cathedral to instrumental music, and on February 1, 1733, at the service on behalf of the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy at St. Paul's, Handel's *Te Deum*, *Jubilate*, and two anthems were performed by a much greater number of voices than usual, about fifty gentlemen performing gratis.² Mr. Walcot quotes from the Nonne's Priestess Tale of Chaucer a couple of lines which he considers proves that even in the poet's day, and he died in 1400, the organ was only used at festival times:—

“His vois was merrier than the mery orgon
On massie days that in the churches gon.”

In my own youthful days it was a very common thing to have in village churches a band of rustics with fiddles and flutes stationed in the west gallery to accompany the singing of Tate and Brady's Metrical Psalms. This was in the Midlands, where, if I mistake not, things ecclesiastical were often at a very low ebb. The men played, of course, with far more vigour than taste; a noise rather than melody seemed to be the thing aimed at. A clergyman has told me that when he went to Castle Morton, near Tewkesbury, in 1868, the west gallery was occupied by a bass viol and three violins. I merely mention this to show that what I have heard called a “Nebuchadnezzar band” in church was continued almost until our own time, and there are pro-

¹ “Custom of Cathedrals,” p. 108.

² *Gentlemen's Magazine*, February, 1733.

bably such things still in use. Barrel organs with, of course, an exceedingly limited selection of tunes, were, within living memory, by no means uncommon. A lady friend tells me that one of these organs was in use in the church of Great Bircham, a village in Norfolk, in 1869, and for some years afterwards. The handle, she says, was always turned very rapidly, but the music produced was slower than *legato*, and the singing was drawling to a ludicrous degree. The congregation on rising to sing faced the organ, which stood in the north aisle.

But to proceed. Mr. Abbey seems to think that the ignorance of parish clerks had much to do with the debased condition into which church music had fallen, for in the last century they seem to have had the chief direction of it, even to choosing the metrical psalms which should be sung. He quotes from John Wesley's works, and relates how he mentioned an amusing reminiscence of his boyhood. "One Sunday, immediately after sermon, my father's clerk said, in an audible voice, 'Let us sing to the praise, etc., a hymn of my own composing:—

" 'King William is come home, come home,
King William home is come,
Therefore let us together sing
The hymn that's called *Te Dum*.' " ¹

Let us try to imagine the condition in which the church must have been when such a thing as this could be possible. It must, however, be borne in mind that it did not go on without protest. Thus an article from the *Weekly Miscellany*, reprinted in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* for February, 1741, treats of "The Abuse of Psalmody in Churches." It is complained that in most parishes a set of men called the "singers" manage the psalm singing and

¹ "Works," x., 445.

anthems as they like; choose the portions to be sung themselves, in spite of the parson, and often make absurd selections, and use tunes in which by reason of their newness and variety the congregation could not take part. It is regretted that the custom of repeating the psalm line by line is given up, although it is condemned by Bishop Wren as "indecent and uncouth," and by Dr. Watts as an "unhappy way of singing."

Things must, indeed, have been bad when such a barbarous practice as that just mentioned could be regarded by any man of ordinary intellect as being preferable to any existing practice.

It would seem that this habit of reading the metrical psalms line by line was introduced by the Puritans, from whom we have inherited other church abominations. Take the following passage from the *Westminster Directory*:—"In singing of psalms . . . for the present, where many of the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some other fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officers, doe reade the psalme, line by line, before the singing thereof."

Miss C. M. Yonge has given me a curious experience of her own, which would seem to point to a more decent and reverend method of conducting Divine service than might have been expected. She said that in her early days the people at a church which she attended "made the responses in a full harmonious cadence as if it were the tradition of a chant." This was in a church very old and dilapidated, with a service only once on a Sunday, and no resident clergyman.

The playing of what were called "Voluntaries," except before and after service, is a custom which, I fancy, has almost died out. Yet I remember that when I was a boy, and used to go to St. Philip's Church, Birmingham, a "Voluntary" was always played after the reading of the

second lesson on a Sunday. The clergy, the clerk, and all the congregation sat whilst it was going on. I believe that in those days this was no uncommon practice. In some places it was customary for a "Voluntary" to be played after the Psalms, and also before the second lesson.

It would be interesting to know something about the introduction of surpliced choirs in parish churches, but I regret to say that I have very little information about this. The Vicar of Sherborne, Dorsetshire, writes:—"I perfectly well remember, when a boy, seeing the choir boys wear surplices in the west gallery of the Abbey Church, here. After a time these boys were replaced by girls of a 'Blue School,' as it was called, who were disrespectfully described as 'screaming maidens.' My predecessor, the Rev. E. Harston, when the church was restored, instituted a regular choir, and finding the old surplices, after a time obtained surplices for the men and boys, and since then we have had a regular surpliced choir who sit in the choir stalls." Some have supposed that at Milbourne Port, near Sherborne, the choir, surpliced, occupied the west gallery, but the incumbent tells me the singers there were first put into surplices between thirty and forty years ago by his father, the rector and squire of the parish, merely because their conduct in the west gallery, now abolished, was not exemplary.

The Rev. A. T. Fryer tells me that formerly at Exeter Cathedral the choir boys on their admission were formally installed. The chorister elect used to sit upstairs in the organ-loft until after the second lesson. He then came down the steps, and was met at the bottom by the vergers with their "pokers," and the head choir boy. A procession was formed, and at the entrance to the stalls a halt was made, when the head choir boy recited as follows:—"I, A. B., do hereby instal you, C. D., as a chorister of this Cathedral Church of St. Peter." The Dean's name was also

introduced. For that ceremony there was a fee of about £1 2s. 6d., which was divided amongst the boys according to rank, the vergers also receiving their share.

He also has informed me that when he was a choir boy there, Bishop Philpotts, when present at the mid-day Celebration on Sundays, was accustomed to bless the boys in this wise:—"At the end of the service we filed out from the back of the communicants (having been sitting not in the stalls but on a wooden bench behind the communicants) and passed from the choir to the south aisle. Two long benches with kneelers had been previously placed athwart the south aisle between the choir door and the private entrance to the Palace. As the Bishop passed through he laid his hands on each boy, and said to him, 'God bless you.'"

A few words about carols. The beautiful words of the carols written by Dr. Neale and others, and the charming melodies to which they have been set, have done much to lead to the disuse of certain old favourites, which probably will in a few years be forgotten. The rector of Grasmere has told me that the old carol, beginning "A Virgin unspotted," was traditional in that parish until some thirty years ago, when for some reason it ceased to be sung. Latterly it has been revived, to the great joy of the people, who in the North are warmly attached to old customs. I remember that shortly after I was ordained—say about forty years ago—I was fairly puzzled by the first line of this carol as it was rendered by an ill-taught village boy. Some children came to my door one Christmas Eve, and I asked them what carols they knew. The first two mentioned were, as their spokesman pronounced the words, "David and Lazarus," and "The Virgin and Spotty." Of course the former of these was easy of interpretation, but the latter for a few moments puzzled me, as I had never heard of the carol. Of course I chose "The Virgin and

Spotty," and the words were pronounced by the children exactly as I have written them.

Amongst the carols which are now rapidly becoming obsolete is one which was formerly very popular. Twenty years hence its use will very likely be a thing of the past, if it is not now almost forgotten. It was called "The Seven Joys of Mary," and ran as follows :—

" The first great joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of one,
To see her ransomed Jesus Christ
Sucking at her breast bone :
Sucking at her breast bone, Good Lord,
Oh ! blessed may we be,
With Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
To all eternity.

" The next great joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of two,
To see her ransomed Jesus Christ
Making the lame to go :
Making the lame to go, Good Lord, etc.

" The next great joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of three,
To see her ransomed Jesus Christ
Making the blind to see :
Making the blind to see, Good Lord, etc.

" The next great joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of four,
To see her ransomed Jesus Christ
Reading the Bible o'er :
Reading the Bible o'er, Good Lord, etc.

" The next great joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of five,

To see her ransomed Jesus Christ
 Making the dead alive :
 Making the dead alive, Good Lord, etc.

“ The next great joy that Mary had,
 It was the joy of six,
 To see her ransomed Jesus Christ
 Bearing the Crucifix :
 Bearing the Crucifix, Good Lord, etc.

“ The next great joy that Mary had,
 It was the joy of seven,
 To see her ransomed Jesus Christ
 Ascending into Heaven :
 Ascending into Heaven, Good Lord,
 Oh ! blessed may we be,
 With Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
 To all eternity.”

A lady has been kind enough to send me a copy of a very singular old Cornish carol which in its quaint construction strongly reminds one of the old friend of our childhood, “The House that Jack Built.” It is thrown into the form of a dialogue between a soprano and a bass vocalist. The Soprano begins:—

“ *Soprano*.—Come and I will sing you.

Bass.—What will you sing me ?

Soprano.—I will sing you one, O.

Bass.—What is your one, O ?

Soprano.—One of them was all alone,

And ever will remain so.

Come and I will sing you.

Bass.—What will you sing me ?

Soprano.—I will sing you two, O.

Bass.—What is your two, O ?

Soprano.—Two of them were lily white babes,

Dressed all in green, O.

One of them was all alone,

And ever will remain so.

Come and I will sing you.

Bass.—What will you sing me?

Soprano.—I will sing you three, O.

Bass.—What is your three, O?

Soprano.—Three of them were strangers;

Two of them were lily white babes,

Dressed all in green, O.

One of them was all alone,

And ever will remain so.

Come and I will sing you."

And so on until we come to the last stanza, which runs:—

"*Soprano*.—Twelve were the twelve Apostles;

Eleven are they that have gone to Heaven;

Ten are the ten Commandments;

Nine the moon shines bright and clear;

Eight was the great Archangel;

Seven were the seven stars in the sky;

Six were the Cherubim waiters;

Five were the ferry men in the boat;

Four were the Gospel preachers;

Three of them were strangers;

Two of them were lily white babes,

Dressed all in green, O;

One of them was all alone,

And ever shall remain so."

Let us now see how they arranged their carol singing in the Isle of Man in days gone by. On Christmas Eve, or "Oiel Verry" (Mary's Eve) as it is called in the Manx, a number of persons used to assemble in each parish church, and proceed to chant carols or "Carvals." There was no unison or concert about the chanting, but a single person would stand up with a lighted candle in his or her hand, and chant in a dismal monotone verse after verse of some old Manx "Carval," until the candle was burnt out. Then another person would start up, and go through a similar performance. No fresh

candle might be lighted after the clock had chimed midnight. An elaborate service of song with trained choirs, and all decorous musical and religious accessories, has now taken the place of the quaint old Carval singing.¹

¹ *Notes and Queries*, March 6, 1880.

CHAPTER XIII.

RUSH-BEARING AND CHURCH DECORATION.

MOST people know that in olden time it was the custom to strew the floors of grand banqueting halls with rushes in lieu of the carpets which we use now. Rushes were at times used ceremonially, as when processions of more than ordinary importance were in progress, the path over which they went was thus strewn. Churches were formerly strewn with rushes on great occasions. It is curious to notice that this practice was continued in some places to quite modern times. A clerical correspondent tells me that, up to the passing of the Municipal Reform Bill, the Town Clerk of Norwich was accustomed to pay to the sub-sacrist of the cathedral an annual guinea for strewing the floor with rushes on the Mayor's Day, from the western door to the entrance of the choir.

How or when rush-bearing came to be regarded as a religious ceremony I cannot say, but the fact remains. As with the majority of old customs which have survived in more or less completeness to our own day, it is in the Northern Counties that the ceremonial has been retained. Many accounts of what ordinarily takes place at these rush-bearing festivals have been published; but, notwithstanding that, it would not be right for me to pass them by unnoticed. I cannot do better than avail myself of an account kindly sent to me by Mr. Alexander D. H. Leadman, F.S.A., of Boroughbridge, who has described what he himself witnessed on one occasion.

He says, that at many little villages in Westmoreland rush-bearing takes place ; but in some of these the religious element has given way to secular festivities which are often the reverse of edifying. Yet the interesting ceremony is still carried on with sacred service. On or about the eve of the last Sunday in July, garlands of flowers intermingled with rushes, and arranged in designs of various shapes, many of them showing both taste and skill in their construction, are borne by the village girls walking in procession. After parading the village they wend their way to the church, which is decorated for the occasion, where they are left. Evensong is said, hymns sung, and a sermon preached appropriate to the occasion. My correspondent describes it as a lovely sight not soon to be forgotten.

The day upon which the Rush-bearing Festival was kept varied in different localities. Mr. H. Fishwick, F.S.A., of Rochdale, writing in 1876, states that, "at Milnrow and Heywood, it was held on the first Sunday in August; at Littleborough on the last Sunday in July; at Rochdale on the third Sunday in August; at Whitworth on the second Sunday in September. In all these places "the rush-carts" have disappeared, but the festival is still observed as a holyday on Monday and Tuesday. Mr. Fishwick thinks that it was not more than a dozen years from the date of his writing since the last rush-cart, drawn by twenty or thirty ribbon-bedecked men, and preceded by a brass band, was drawn through the streets of Rochdale.

Something has already been said about the decoration of churches, but a few more notes on the subject may appropriately be given here.

It is, I think, imagined by many people that, although it has been the general rule to decorate churches at Christmas, no such attention has until late years been paid to the other two great festivals. No doubt it was quite the

exception to dress the churches at Easter and Whitsun Tide; but yet the custom was observed in a good many parishes. Thus Miss C. M. Yonge has told me that she remembers the church at Otterbourne, Winchester, to have been decorated with greenery at Easter and Whitsun Tide, as well as at Christmas, when she was quite a child. This was the case also at Frome Selwood.¹ At Hawkhurst, Dorset, as a clerical correspondent informs me, the church used to be decorated with flowers at Easter and Whitsun Tide, and with evergreens at Christmas, more than sixty years ago, and Easter decorations were always put up in the Parish Church of St. Cuthbert's, Wells, quite at the beginning of the century. It is curious to notice the different evergreens that were used at the several festivals. Thus, at Winterslow Church, Wiltshire, holly was formerly used at Christmas, box at Easter, and yew at Whitsun Tide. The peculiarity here was that the Whitsun Tide greenery was kept up till the following Christmas. The yew is not a cheerful-looking evergreen, and the effect during the long Trinityseason must have been rather depressing. At Harrietsham, Kent, yew only was employed at Easter, whilst at Christmas other evergreens were used. It was the rule at Long Wittenham, Berkshire, for the church to be decorated in olden time at Christmas with holly and ivy, and at Easter with yew and box. The church at Sonning, in the same county, was dressed with yew on Easter Day, and this was an immemorial custom; and the same may be said of Berkeley Church, near Frome, Somersetshire. A different usage has from time immemorial been followed at Heybridge, near Maldon, Essex. The church on Whitsun Day was strewn with rushes, and decorated with boughs of maple. At Castleton, in Derbyshire, there has been a quaint custom; a garland was put on the church-steeple on May 29, and there left until the day came round again. A con-

¹ *Ecclesiologist*, June, 1856.

tributor to the *Ecclesiologist*, in 1865, tells us that, on the occasion of a visit which he paid to the church of Ashton-under-Hill, a chapelry to Beckford, Worcestershire, he found suspended inside the tower a bough of misletoe, which the venerable sexton led him to understand was an institution of the ringers. What use they had for it there the old gentleman could not explain, but said that it remained there all the year, and was supplanted by another on the following Christmas.

A word or two about the pre-Reformation mode of decking churches, as it seems quaint.

In answer to a question from a correspondent in May, 1852, the editor of *Notes and Queries*, the late Mr. Thoms, wrote :—"Garlands of rosemary and woodruff were formerly used to decorate the churches on St. Barnabas Day (June 11), as appears from many old entries in church books; e.g. in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Mary-at-Hill in the city of London, 17 and 19 Edward IV., the following entry occurs :—"For Rose garlondis and Woodrove garlondis on St. Barnabas Daye xj. d.' The reason why woodruff was used, Gerard tells in his 'Historie of Plants,' p. 965 :—"It doth very well attemper the aire, and coole and make fresh the place, to the delight and comfort of such as are therein."

People in general know so little about Welsh church customs that the following may be worth placing on record. In many Welsh churches it is usual for the floral decorations put up on festivals to remain on the walls till the next festival occurs. Mr. H. W. King, of Leigh, Essex, has told me that after visiting the church at Strata Florida in Cardiganshire, on August 21, 1873, he made this note :—"The sear and shrivelled leaves of the Easter decoration still hung on the walls and around the windows. This, I am told, is a Welsh custom, and may have a significance unknown to me."

A different kind of church decoration from those referred to above may be interesting. The late Canon Humble, writing in 1874, said:—"At Houghton-le-Spring, Durham, it was the custom from time immemorial at the greater festivals to encase the pulpit in rich tapestry. The tapestry was ancient, and had evidently at one time been much larger, and been used to hang from the walls during the greater octaves. I saw the pulpit so adorned in 1849."

CHAPTER XIV.

HOLY WELLS.

WE now come to a very interesting portion of church folklore, for it will be found by those who take the trouble to inquire, that a great many curious traditions and usages are connected with springs and wells, many of which had their origin in ancient times, and with certain modifications are retained at the present day, more especially among those who live in the remoter parts of the kingdom.

It may be well to begin with Cornwall, and I am fortunate in having secured the help of Mr. S. J. Wills, Master of Wheal Ruby Board Schools, Wendron, Helston, Cornwall, who has supplied me with most valuable information concerning the holy wells in his own county. I am indebted to him for the following account of them. He writes :—

“The spread of Christianity in Cornwall occasioned the dedication of many springs, to which miraculous virtues had been ascribed to patron saints, and over these, in most instances, small edifices were erected, which were used as oratories, baptistries, or for other purposes.

“It is highly probable that many of these wells were originally selected by the Druids, who attributed supernatural virtue and sanctity to springs of water, and when the early Christian missionaries came hither from Ireland in the fourth and succeeding centuries, they found that the people held them in high repute. Therefore, in order

the more readily to obtain converts, they found it desirable not to abolish certain customs, but to continue them with a new meaning. They accordingly built walls round the springs, and in process of time these were covered in, and the springs themselves dedicated to some saintly patron. Polwhele, the historian, recognised this feature, and remarks that 'The well had before a spirit, it now has a guardian saint.'

"The Druids are said by Dr. Borlase to have been able to impose on the credulity of the ignorant by practising divination. They pretended to foretell with great certainty the event of battles by a process of incantation, known only to themselves, which saw in every bubble of the water, every ripple of the current, and every wave of the spring, when put in agitation, some elucidation of the interrogations of vulgar inquirers.

"Even now it is customary to regard these oratories with a veneration bordering on idolatry, and there are many sufficiently fanatical to cast pins into the water from superstitious motives.

"In St. Colans' Parish is Our Lady of Nant's Well, which, according to Norden, was visited in his time (1584) by men, women, and children, who wished to 'foreknowe of the Ladye of the well by givinge an offering, and casting a Palme Crosse into the water on Palme Sunday, what fortune shall befall them that year.'

"In Gulnal, near Penzance, the site of a holy well is still pointed out, which was visited, says old Hals, by credulous people, who came 'to inquire after the life or death of their absent friends, when being arrived they demanded the question at the well whether such a person, by name, be living, in health, sick, or dead. If the party be living, and in health, the still quiet water of the well-pit, as soon as the question is demanded, will instantly bubble or boil up as a pot, clear crystalline water; if sick, foul

and puddle water; if the party be dead, it will neither bubble, boil up, or alter its colour.'

"Dr. Borlase says that its miraculous waters were consulted concerning goods or cattle lost or stolen.

"The Gothic Well of Menacuddle, near St. Austell, was resorted to as a wishing well. Visitors who hoped for good luck through life threw a crooked pin into the water, presuming that other pins previously thrown in by former devotees would rise to meet it ere it reached the bottom.

"St. Madron's Well, now in ruins, was much frequented for similar purposes. It is the most celebrated of the kind in Cornwall, and concerning the efficacy of its water Bishop Hall writes:—'Of this kind was that (no less than miraculous) cure which at St. Maderne's in Cornwall was wrought upon a poor cripple whereof (besides the attestation of many hundreds of the neighbours) I took a strict and personal examination in that last visitation which I ever did or shall hold. This man, that for sixteen years together was fain to walk upon his hands by reason of the close contraction of the sinews of his legs, was (upon monitions in his dream to wash in that well) suddenly so restored to his limbs that I saw him able both to walk and to get his own maintenance. I found here was no art nor collusion, the thing done; the author invisible.' On the first Sunday in May the custom of visiting the well is still retained, when, at early dawn, many young folk, chiefly girls from Penzance, walk hastily to the wishing well before sunrise to ascertain the number of years that will elapse before they will become blessed with husbands. The ceremony most observed for this object is to fasten together in the form of a cross two bits of grass stem or straw, each about an inch long, with a large pin. Then on approaching the well, each visitor throws into it a crooked pin, and if lucky, other pins will be seen to rise from the bottom to meet the last offering. The custom of bathing children in the well

for the cure of various ailments used to be observed on the first three Wednesdays in May. Red rags were also fastened to the surrounding bushes as votive offerings."

It is to be noticed that each of the principle holy wells possessed a distinctive power independent of other attributes. St. Nun's Well, for example, was deemed efficacious in the case of insanity. The manner of "boussening" as practised in its waters is thus quaintly described by Carew: "The water running from St. Nun's Well fell into a square and inclosed walled plot, which might be filled at what depth they listed. Upon this was the frantic person set to stand, his back towards the pool, and from thence with a sudden blow in the breast tumbled headlong into the pond, when a strong fellow, provided for the nonce, took him and tossed him up and down in the water; the patient, by foregoing his strength, had somewhat forgot his fury. Then was he conveyed to the church and certain things sung over him; upon which, laudingly, if his right wits returned, St. Nun had the thanks, but if there appeared small amendment, he was boussed again and again while there remained in him any hope of life or recovery."

Another well dedicated to St. Nun is situated on the western side of a beautiful valley, through which runs the Trelawney river, in the parish of Pelynt. The country people sometimes call it Piskris Well. Mr. J. H. T. Blight visited it some years since, and on observing a number of pins in the basin of the well, he inquired of a man at work near the spot, who informed him that it was done to get the good-will of the Piskris, who, it appears, after the tribute of a pin not only ceased to trouble the faithful, but rendered fortunate the operations of husbandry.

Concerning St. Uny's Well in Sancreed, Dr. Borlase writes that on paying it a visit he found two women there, who had come from a neighbouring parish, busily employed in bathing a child, and they informed him that people who

had a mind to receive any benefit from St. Uny's Well must come and wash upon the first three Wednesdays in May.

There is a well near Redruth, at the foot of the Wrindick Hill, called Carn Brie, and the peculiar virtue ascribed to it is that whoever should be baptised in its waters would be preserved from being ignominiously hanged.

"In Grade Parish, near the Lizard Point, is a well dedicated to a noted hermit-saint called St. Rumon. The building which incloses it is faithfully preserved, and the water used for baptism in Grade Church has been procured from this well from time immemorial."

"St. Neot's Well was celebrated in ancient times, and its legend is painted in one of the handsome windows of the church. St. Keyne's Well is another remarkable spring immortalised by Southey's ballad on an amusing circumstance connected with its waters. The local tradition states that whoever drank first of its waters on entering the marriage state would become master for life. It was customary, therefore, immediately on the conclusion of the ceremony, for both parties to rush to the well, which lies some distance from the church. On one occasion the husband determined to be the first to reach the well, so:—

" 'I hastened as soon as the wedding was done,
And left my wife in the porch,
But in faith she had been wiser than me,
For she took a bottle to church.' "

In Wendron, on the farm of Trelill, is an interesting specimen of these peculiar springs. The oratory is formed of granite slabs, and the roof, now shrouded with ivy, is of the same material. The only aperture to give light is a Gothic arched doorway inside. The water weeps from a fissure into a square granite basin about a foot square. From this

it is conveyed through a channel under the floor into a river which runs down the neighbouring valley. On each side are stone benches, and over the spring is a niche in which was formerly placed a statue of the patroness, St. Mary the Virgin.

Though superstitions and traditions are connected with these wells, many of the structures are fast falling into decay, and are little more than shapeless ruins.

Probably the most famous amongst the many holy wells is that in Flintshire, which gives a name to a parliamentary borough and market town about sixteen miles north-west of Chester. The well is dedicated to St. Winifred, and has enjoyed a repute for certain alleged healing properties ever since the seventh century. There is a wild and utterly impossible legend connected with its origin which need not be related. The well is inclosed in a Gothic building, which was erected in the reign of Henry VII., and forms a sort of crypt under a small chapel close to the parish church. This building was put up by members of the Stanley family. The traditionary belief in the miraculous powers of the water has lasted to a comparatively recent date. James II. paid a visit to the shrine in 1688, and received for his pains the shift worn by his great-grandmother at her execution. Pennant, who wrote his tour in Wales in 1784, found the roof of the vault hung with the crutches of grateful cripples. He says "the resort of pilgrims to these *fontinalia* has considerably decreased. The greatest number are from Lancashire. In the summer still a few are to be seen in the water, in deep devotion, up to their chins for hours, sending up their prayers, or performing a number of evolutions round the polygonal well, or threading the arches a prescribed number of times."

In London there are various ancient wells which have retained their supernatural character later than most people imagine. For example, adjoining St. Brides, otherwise St.

Bridget's, Churchyard, Fleet Street, London, is or was an old well dedicated to the saint, and commonly known as Bride-well. There was a palace near it which was given by Edward VI. to the City of London, as a poorhouse of correction. From this has sprung the popular name of "Bride-well," to signify a prison. The last public use of the water of St. Brides' Well, to which certain special qualities were attached, drained it so much that the inhabitants of St. Brides' Parish could not get their usual supply. There was a sudden demand, Hone tells us, a day or two before July 19, 1821, on which day George IV. was crowned at Westminster. Several men were engaged in filling thousands of bottles. Mr. Walker, of the hotel, 10 Bridge Street, Blackfriars, who was purveyor of water for the Coronation, obtained it by the only means through which the "sainted fluid" was then attainable—from the cast-iron pump over St. Brides' Well in Bride Lane.

Another of the London wells which had a widespread reputation was that known as St. Chad's. This spring was in the neighbourhood of what was in former days known as Battle Bridge, *i.e.* somewhere up the Gray's Inn Road, starting from Holborn. This, too, had medicinal qualities, and was regarded in olden times as miraculous. It was situated in an inclosure, formerly called "The Garden," and as Hone tells us, was presided over by "The Lady of the Well," who appears to have been an female in a black bonnet, cotton gown, and check apron. St. Chad's Well was, as it would seem, a sort of subscription water. For a guinea a year a man might drink as much, or as little, or none at all, just as he pleased. For this privilege, covering shorter periods, he was required to pay nine and sixpence quarterly, four and sixpence monthly, and one and sixpence weekly. Failing this, he might qualify for a single visit by paying sixpence, for which a large tumbler of warm water was handed to him. All this took place at the beginning of th

last century, and Hone, who while giving facts with tolerable accuracy, was by no means an infatuated believer in the miraculous, remarks, shrewdly enough, that chemists in these latter days can produce a draught as effectual as the virtues of St. Chad's Well at the small price of a half-penny.

While treating of this particular neighbourhood it is worth mentioning that the street which is now called King's Cross Road, and which is, to all intents and purposes, parallel to Gray's Inn Road on the eastern side, was formerly known as Bagnigge's Wells Road. Doubtless there are some traditions about Bagnigge's Wells, but I never heard them. If anybody can enlighten me I shall be grateful.

Holywell Street, by St. Mary's Church in the Strand, scarcely maintains the character suggested by its name, and it would require a considerable flush of holy water to wash away the impurity of the literary productions exhibited in the shop windows in that queer by-street. The street itself is soon to be a thing of the past, and happily so. The virtues of the holy well, from which it takes its name, have, so far, not proved efficacious.

There are some strange ideas as to dropping pins into some of these holy wells, which have been practised until quite recent years.

About a couple of hundred years ago a certain Dr. Knerden wrote about a holy well, once famous, dedicated to St. Helen, and situated near Brindle in Lancashire, to which the neighbouring people resorted each year upon St. Helen's Day (August 18). The Empress Helen was a native of Great Britain, and was the wife of Constantius, who distinguished himself during the time of persecution by protecting the Christians in every way that he could. The custom of those visiting the well was to throw in pins as an offering. I am quite unable to account for this

custom, but it was a very usual one. There is, I believe, another St. Helen's Well, near Sefton in West Lancashire, into which pins were formerly thrown by those who resorted to it.

Mr. Charles Hardwick, in his "Traditions, Superstitions, and Folklore of Lancashire," refers to a contribution to *Notes and Queries* by "Seleucus," in which he speaks of a well in the Welsh peninsula of Gower in Glamorganshire. It is called the "Cefyn Bryn," or the Holy Well. He says it is still supposed to be under the special patronage of the Virgin Mary, and a crooked pin is the offering of every visitor to its sacred precincts. It is believed that if this pin is dropped in with fervent faith all the many pins which have been thrown into it may be seen rising from the bottom to meet the new one.

Near Wooller in Northumberland is a spring known as the "Pin Well," into which country girls are wont to drop a crooked pin as they pass, and a similar well is situated in Westmoreland, where the like custom prevails. The idea in both places is that the well is in charge of a fairy, and that it is necessary to propitiate the little lady by a present of some sort; and hence the pin as most convenient. It is made crooked for luck's sake; crooked things being considered, according to long-standing tradition, as lucky things, as our grandmothers were wont to carry crooked sixpences in their purses.

As I stated above, a belief in the miraculous virtues of certain wells has been retained till comparatively modern times. Thus, a spring in connection with the ancient Abbey of Glastonbury, as Mr. Hardwick tells us, sustained its reputation for sanctity and for medical virtues until a very recent period. "In consequence of some astounding and, indeed, miraculous cures supposed to be effected by its agency, immense numbers of invalids flocked to it in the years 1750 and 1751. It is said that in the month of May

in the latter year 10,000 persons visited Glastonbury under the influence of this superstition."

There seems to be a good deal of credulousness in the matter of special wells in Scotland, as witness the Craigie Well mentioned by Chambers.¹ His correspondent is rather vague as to its locality, but I believe it is in East Ross-shire, and I will briefly summarise what is said about the Craigie Well.

The first Sunday morning in May is the day prescribed by tradition for the people to visit the well, and no one dreams of going there without bringing some sort of offering, as it would be considered an insult to the "healing waters" to omit it. The intrinsic value of the present seems to be a matter of indifference, for on a briar bush close by were to be seen a number of scraps of cloth which were hung up there as offerings.

The writer above-mentioned states that for more than a week before the morning appointed for this strange pilgrimage there is scarcely a word heard among farm-servants within five miles of the spot but the question:—"Are thee no ganging to Craigack Well to get thour health secured another year?" He paid a visit to the place on one occasion in order to see how the pilgrims passed the Sunday morning there. Although he arrived an hour before sunrise, a number of people were already there, and numbers from all quarters were still pouring in. The people were eagerly pressing forward in order to get a drink at the well before the sun appeared, for the popular belief is that the water will otherwise have no beneficial effect. On the morning when the writer in the "Book of Days" was there an incident occurred which illustrated this belief. He says:—"The sun was now shooting up his first rays when all eyes were directed to the top of the brae, attracted by a man coming in great haste, whom all

¹ "Book of Days," vol. i., p. 638.

recognised as Jack Forsyth, a very honest and pious, but eccentric individual. Scores of voices shouted, 'You are too late, Jock, the sun is rising; surely you have slept this morning.' The newcomer, a middle-aged man with a droll squint, perspiring profusely, and out of breath, pressed, nevertheless, through the crowd, and stopped not till he reached the well. Then muttering a few inaudible words, he bent down on his knees and took a large draught. He then rose up and said—'O Lord, Thou knowest that weel would it be for me this day an I had stooped my knees and my heart before Thee in spirit and in truth as often as I have stoopit them afore this well, but we maun keep the custom of our fathers.' So he stepped aside among the rest, and dedicated his offering to the briar bush, which by this time could hardly be seen through the number of shreds which covered it."

Since the above was written, there has, I understand, been a perceptible decrease in the numbers resorting to Craigie Well.

As regards the offering of rags at holy wells, the Rev. J. T. Fowler tells me that there is a spring at Holy Well Dale, near Winterton, Lincolnshire, formerly celebrated for its healing properties, and the bushes around used to be hung with scraps of cloth as offerings from visitors.

In olden times it was the custom in Wales, supposing that there was in the parish a well dedicated to a saint, to use the water from it on the occasion of a baptism. Brand tells us that such water, after it had been used for baptism, was believed to be good for sore eyes.

As we have seen above, anything seems to have been good enough as an offering by persons visiting holy wells. In the neighbourhood of Newcastle-on-Tyne, is a holy spring which used to be called "Ray Well." Not far off is Bede's Well. So late as the middle of the last century, it was the custom to dip children in it if they were troubled

with any bodily infirmity. The fee to the well seems to have been scarcely commensurate with its supposed efficacy, for it consisted only of a crooked pin!

It appears that this resorting of people to holy wells did not find favour with the authorities of the Scottish establishment. Thus we learn from the session records, that in 1628 a number of persons were brought before the kirk session at Falkirk, and were accused of going to Christ's Well on the Sundays in May to seek their health, and the whole being found guilty were sentenced to repent "in linens" three several Sabbaths. "And it is statute and ordained that if any person or persons be found superstitiously and idolatrously, after this, to have passed in pilgrimage to Christ's Well on the Sundays in May to seek their health, they shall repent in sacco (sackcloth) and linen three several Sabbaths, and pay twenty lib (Scots) *toties quoties* for ilk fault, and if they cannot pay it the baillies shall be recommended to put them in ward, and to be fed on bread and water for aught days."¹ Hone adds, that for the preservation of the charm, the pilgrims were obliged to keep silence the whole time to and from the well, and not allow the vessel in which the water was to touch the ground. Mr. Robert Keir, who sent this extract, further notes that in 1657, a number of parishioners were summoned to the session for believing in the powers of the Well of Airth, a village about six miles north of Falkirk on the banks of the Forth; and the whole were sentenced to be publicly rebuked for the sin. Then again, on Feb. 3, 1757, and on subsequent days, eleven people were summoned before the kirk session for the crime of going to this same well to fetch water for the cure of their suffering relations and friends. These people were all publicly admonished for "superstitious carriage." Nevertheless, early in this century, a farmer and his servant were known

¹ "Every Day Book," ii., 686.

to travel fifty miles for the purpose of bringing water from a charmed well in the Highlands to cure their sick cattle.

Closely connected with the veneration with which holy wells were regarded, is the annual Well Dressing Festival at Tissington, near Ashbourne in Derbyshire. This takes place on Ascension Day. I am sorry that I have never been present on this occasion, so that I might give a personal description of the ceremony. However, the vicar of Tissington has told me that the account given by an eye-witness in Chambers' "Book of Days" is sufficiently accurate, and that I may safely take it as the basis of my description.

Chambers' volumes were published in 1866, and, no doubt, since then, tastefulness in the style of dressing the wells has improved, but judging from a print illustrating the mode of decoration five-and-thirty years ago, it must even then have been very effective.

The writer above referred to, tells us that on the Holy Thursday he was at Tissington, and although he was there in good time, the village was full of visitors who had come from places many miles round to take part in the festival, and booths were erected to supply the rustics with nuts, and gingerbread, and toys. The church was crowded quite early, and large numbers of people were unable to get admission, but had to wait outside for that part of the service which was conducted at the several wells. As soon as the sermon was ended the clergyman left the pulpit, and marched into the village at the head of the procession which was formed. After him came the band, then the family from the Hall, and their visitors, the rest of the congregation following. A halt was made at the first of the five wells, and I must give the rest of the ceremony in the writer's own words. He says:—

"The name 'well' scarcely gives a proper idea of these beautiful structures; they are rather fountains or cascades,

the water descending from above, and not rising as in a well. Their height varies from ten to twelve feet, and the original stone frontage is on this day hidden by a wooden erection in the form of an arch or some other elegant design. Over these planks a layer of plaster of Paris is spread, and whilst it is wet, flowers without leaves are stuck in it forming a most beautiful mosaic pattern. On one the large yellow field ranunculus was arranged in letters, and so a verse of Scripture or of a hymn was recalled to the spectator's mind; on another, a white dove was sculptured in the plaster and set in the ground-work of the humble violet; the daisy which our poet Chaucer would gaze upon for hours together formed a diaper work of red and white; the pale yellow primrose was set off by the rich red of the ribes; nor were the coral berries of the holly, mountain ash, and yew forgotten. These are carefully gathered and stored in the winter to be ready for the May Day Fête."

Here I must interpose a passing remark to prevent misapprehension. Why the writer calls it a "May Day Fête" I know not. As a matter of fact Holy Thursday very rarely indeed falls on May Day, and if it did, the well-dressing could not be called a "May Day Fête," but an "Ascension Day Fête." From 1866 to the present time (1893) Ascension Day has never once fallen on May 1. The next time that this will happen will be in 1913. But to return; the writer goes on to say:—

"It is scarcely possible to describe the vivid colouring and beautiful effect of these favourites of nature arranged in wreaths and garlands and devices of every hue, and then the pure sparkling water which pours down from the midst of them into the rustic moss-grown stones beneath completes the enchantment, and makes this feast of the well-flowering one of the most beautiful of all the old customs that are left in merrie England."

We now come to a description of the religious function which takes place by the wells. The writer says:—"The groups of country people and visitors, dressed in their holyday clothes, stood reverently round while the clergyman read the first of the three psalms appointed for the day, and then gave out one of Bishop Heber's beautiful hymns, in which all joined with heart and voice. When this was over all moved forward to the next well where the next psalm was read and another hymn sung; the Epistle and the Gospel being read at the last two wells. The service was now over, and the people dispersed to wander through the village and park which is thrown open. The cottagers vie with each other in showing hospitality to the strangers, and many kettles are boiled at their fires for those who have brought the materials for a picnic on the green. It is welcomed as a season of mirth and good fellowship, many old friends meeting then to separate for another year should they be spared to see the well-dressing again; whilst the country people enjoy their games and country pastimes with their usual vivacity.

From what the vicar, the Rev. James Fitzherbert, has told me, I do not think that this description is at all over-coloured. He assures me that the religious part of the ceremony is no modern introduction. He himself can vouch for its having been carried on for forty or fifty years; and his uncle, Sir W. Fitzherbert, the squire of the parish, can remember it further back than that. The custom, he says, was in abeyance at one time by reason of certain religious differences of opinion, and anti-Popery agitation; but these soon blew over, and the ceremony went on as before. Ascension Day is the greatest day in the whole year with these simple village folk. They clean their houses, paint their garden gates, and smarten up for weeks beforehand, and the vicar tells me that visitors who have

¹ "Book of Days," i., p. 596.

never witnessed the well-dressing before have always expressed their unbounded surprise at the beauty of the whole scene.

A word or two may properly be said as to the supposed origin of the well-dressing custom. It may, of course, be a Christianised survival of the old Roman usage of honouring religiously fountains and wells. There are, however, those who assign to the ceremony a more modern date. It seems that, in 1615, a fearful drought visited Derbyshire, and that no rain fell from March 25 to May 2. Then there was but one shower. Two more came between the latter date and August 4. Thus the whole land was burnt up, yet the Tissington fountains, according to tradition, continued to flow during the time, so that people from ten miles round drove their cattle to drink of the Tissington wells.

There are several other places in Derbyshire where the custom of well-dressing takes place; but, if I mistake not, these are all more or less modern imitations of the Tissington ceremony, and have no claim to be reckoned with it.

Before I pass on to other matters, I will insert some pretty lines which have been written in honour of the Tissington Festival.

“ Still, Dovedale, yield thy flowers to deck the fountains
Of Tissington upon its holyday ;
The customs long preserved among the mountains
Should not be lightly left to pass away.

“ They have their moral, and we often may
Learn from them how our wise forefathers wrought,
Whom they upon the public mind would lay
Some weighty principle, some maxim brought
Home to their hearts, the healthful product of deep thought.”

—EDWARDS.

CHAPTER XV.

SURVIVALS OF HEATHEN CUSTOMS.

ALTHOUGH most cultured persons have a vague idea that some of our religious or quasi-religious customs may have their origin in distinctly heathen practices which existed before the Christian era, there are few, I take it, who could give distinct examples of heathen survivals of a more or less definite kind. Such instances, however, are to be found in our own day, and my object in this paper is to point out some of them.

To begin with Devonshire. The Rev. A. T. Fryer, who was brought up in that county, tells me of a distinctly heathen sacrifice, only modernised, which is still kept up in the parish of King's Teignton, not far from Teignmouth, every Whitsuntide, an account of which is to be found in White's "Devonshire." It appears that on Whitsun Monday a lamb is drawn about the parish in a cart decorated with garlands of lilac, laburnum, and other flowers, and persons are requested to give something towards the expenses of the ceremonial. On Tuesday the lamb is killed and roasted whole in the middle of the village. It is said that formerly it was roasted in the bed of a stream which flows through the village, the water of which had been turned into a new channel temporarily in order that the bed of the stream might be cleansed. The lamb, when cooked, is sold in slices to the poor at a cheap rate. The precise origin of the custom is forgotten, but a tradition,

evidently to be traced back to heathen days, is to this effect. The village at some remote period suffered from a dearth of water, and the inhabitants were advised by their priests to pray to the gods for water, whereupon water sprang up spontaneously in a meadow about a third of a mile above the village, in an estate now called Rydon, amply sufficient to supply the wants of the place, and at present adequate, even in a dry summer, to work three mills. A lamb, it is said, has ever since that time been sacrificed as a votive offering at Whitsuntide in the manner before mentioned. The said water appears like a large pond, from which, in rainy weather, may be seen jets of water springing up some inches above the surface in many parts. The place has been visited by numbers of different scientific bodies, and whether it is really a spring is still a vexed question. The general opinion appears to be that the real spring is on Haldon Hill, and that after flowing down to Lindridge it loses itself in the fissures of the lime rock which abounds in the neighbourhood through which it flows; when it meets with some impediment it bursts up through the soft meadow ground at Rydon, where it has ever had the name of "Fair Water."

Another Devonshire sacrificial custom, evidently having its origin in pagan times, is recorded by "An Old Holne Curate." He says that at Holne, on Dartmoor, the young men, before daybreak on May Day, assemble and seize a ram lamb on the moor. This they fasten to a certain granite pillar, kill it, and roast it whole. At mid-day they scramble to get slices of it to secure good luck for the ensuing year. The day ends with dancing, wrestling, etc.

At Prestonpans, half a century ago, it was customary for the fishermen to set sail on a Sunday. A clergyman in the town was believed to be in the habit of praying against what he regarded as their "Sabbath breaking," but to pre-

vent any injury accruing from his prayer the fishermen used to offer a burnt sacrifice, the victim being an image of rags, which was burnt on the top of their chimneys.

The following is a tolerably strong example of the survival of a distinctly heathen sacrifice, and when names and localities are given, as in this case, the most sceptical must accept it as true in fact :—

Mr. Henderson wrote his "Folklore of the Northern Counties" in 1879, and he says:—"Not fifteen years ago a herd of cattle in the county of Moray being attacked with murrain, one of them was sacrificed by burying alive as a propitiatory offering for the rest; and I am informed by Professor Morecco that a live ox was burnt near Haltwhistle in Northumberland only twenty years ago with the same intent. A similar observance has also lingered on among the Celtic population of Cornwall almost, if not quite, to the present day." It is somewhat startling to read of an ox being offered as a burnt sacrifice in England in our own times after fifteen or more centuries of Christianity. But Mr. Henderson gives other examples of similar doings. They appear, however, to be commoner in Scotland than in England. The Rev. S. Baring-Gould, as I am informed, has stated that in building a new bridge at Halle, which was completed in 1843, the people wanted to have a child immured in the foundation to ensure its stability, so the idea of even human sacrifices can scarcely be said to be extinct in civilised Europe.

Professor J. Y. Simpson, M.D., in his notes on some "Scottish Charm Stones," printed in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, states that he knows of two localities in the Lowlands, one near Biggar in Lanarkshire, and the other near Torpichen in West Lothian, where, within the memory of the past and present generation, living cows have been sacrificed for curative

purposes, or under the hope of arresting the murrain in other members of the herd. In both these cases the cow was sacrificed by being buried alive.

In the Record Office, vol. ccxxiv., No. 74, under date 1589, is a letter from one Price giving information of gross idolatry in Wales. He says that bullocks were offered to idols, and that he saw a young man drive one through a little porch into the churchyard, and heard him cry out, "Thy half to God and to Beyno." This was in the parish of Clynnog, about fifteen miles from Bangor. He represents people as being afraid to cut down trees growing on Beyno's ground, lest he should kill them.

Sir J. Emerson Tennant, writing in 1852, notes that in Lord Rodin's recently published book, entitled "Progress of the Reformation in Ireland," there appears a curious form of fetichism still existing in Inniskea, an island off the coast of Mayo, with about three hundred and eighty inhabitants, amongst whom his lordship says:—"A stone carefully wrapped in flannel is brought out at certain periods to be adored, and when a storm arises, this god is supplicated to send a wreck on their coast. It is added that whenever the aid of this stone god is sought, a flannel dress is dedicated to it. This is sewed on by an old woman, its priestess.

The following is a curious instance of the survival, in a fashion, of the ancient Baal worship. A correspondent to *Notes and Queries* states that the late Lady Baird, of Fern-tower, Perthshire, told him that every year on the first of May a number of men and women assemble at a Druidical circle of stones on her property at Crieff. They light a fire in the centre, and each person puts a bit of oat cake into a shepherd's bonnet; they all sit down, and draw blindfold a piece of cake from the bonnet. One piece has been previously blackened, and whoever gets that piece has to jump through the fire or pay a forfeit. This is, in fact, a remnant

still surviving of the ancient worship of Baal, and the person on whom the lot fell would originally have been burnt as a sacrifice. Now, passing through the fire is taken to represent such a sacrifice, and the payment of the forfeit is considered as the redemption of the victim from the extreme penalty.

In a letter which I received some years ago from the Rector of Charlcombe, Bath, and which is now before me, he told me that in the County Donegal it was the custom to pass an infant across the back and under the belly of a donkey in order to avert measles. What the origin of this could be I am unable to guess. He further stated in his letter that in the same county the peasants used to drive their cattle between two fires to keep off disease. This last, said my correspondent, was certainly a remnant of the ancient heathen festival of Baal, or Baal Tinné (in that parish there was a town land, Beltany, close to which was a Druidical stone circle), kept about December 23, when large bonfires were lighted for purposes of fire-worship, and cattle driven through or between the fires to keep them safe from plague.

The following paragraph appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on June 29, 1867 :—

“The accounts given by the Irish newspapers of the extent to which the old superstition of fire-lighting on Midsummer Eve still prevails show how slowly the relics of paganism disappear among country people, and how natural it was that the old idolatries should come at last to be known as the Creed of the Pagana, the dwellers in villages. These Midsummer fires lighted annually upon the hills are simply relics of the worship of Bel. Beltane or Belteine Day is still a May Day or Midsummer festival in the more ignorant districts of Scotland as well as of Ireland ; and similar superstitious practices are connected

with the lighting of the fires, and, what is still more remarkable, the word is still used in some Scotch almanacs, as a term well known to everybody. In a number of the *Scotsman* a few years ago appeared an announcement that, on Beltane Day, Mr. Robertson was elected as Convener of the Trades, in Canongate, in Edinburgh. The next year the following is to be found—‘On Beltane Day, the weavers, dyers, etc., of the Canongate, elected their office-bearers.’ ”

Mr. Charles Hardwick, in his “Traditions, Superstitions, and Folklore,” gives some instances of the strange survival of Baal-worship. He cites the following from Grimm:—“In consequence of a disease amongst the black cattle, the people agreed to perform an incantation, though they esteemed it a wicked thing. They carried to the top of Carnmoor a wheel and nine spindles, long enough to produce fire by friction. If the fire were not produced before noon, the incantation lost its effect. They failed for several days running. They attributed this failure to the obstinacy of one householder, who would not let his fires be put out for what he considered a wrong purpose. However, by bribing his servants, they contrived to get them extinguished, and on that morning raised their fire. They then sacrificed a heifer, cutting in pieces and burning, while yet alive, the diseased part. They then lighted their own hearths from the pile, and ended by feasting on the remains. Words of incantation were repeated by an old man from Morven, who came as master of the ceremonies, and continued speaking all the time the fire was being raised. Asked to repeat the spell, he said that the sin of repeating it once had brought him to beggary, and that he dared not say those words again.”

Another curious instance of these pagan survivals is given by Mr. Hardwick on the authority of Mr. T. T. Wilkinson, who states that a Lancashire man whom he

knew had "unconsciously resorted to the old worship of Baal, and consumed a live calf in a fire, in order to counteract the influence of his unknown enemies. It would appear that this unhappy victim of malice had resorted to this heathen sacrifice as a last resource, for he had, as we are told, previously nailed horse-shoes to all his doors, but without effect."

So late as the latter portion of last century the records of the Presbytery of Dingwall in Ross-shire show that in the island of Innis Maree, in Loch Maree, bulls were offered up as a sacrifice, and milk offered on the hill-side as a libation. A hundred years previously, *i.e.* in 1678, the Presbytery took action against some of the Mackenzie family for "sacrificing a bull in a heathenish manner in the island of St. Rufus, for the recovery of the health of Cirstane Mackenzie, who was formerly sick and valedudinarie." And to come down almost to the present time, we are told by Mr. Robert Hunt in his "Drolls, Traditions and Superstitions of Old Cornwall," published in 1865, that within the last few years a calf has been thus sacrificed by a farmer in a district where churches, chapels, and schools abound. He afterwards adds, "While correcting these sheets I am informed of two recent instances of this superstition. One of them was the sacrifice of a calf by a farmer near Pontreath for the purpose of removing a disease which had long followed his horses and cows. The other was the burning of a living lamb to save, as the farmer said, his flock from spells which had been cast on 'em."

The Cornish gentleman who sent me the interesting information concerning certain of the holy wells in his county has written for me the following paragraphs relative to the Beltane survival in Cornwall:—

"The peculiar form of worshipping the Druidical deity

Belus, the sun, is retained in Cornwall on St. John's Day under the name of Bel Tan or Bel Tein. Large bonfires are kindled on the tops of the high hills, on June 24, and on the following day, and the country people amuse themselves with excursions on the water. It appears to be a remnant of an ancient Druidic festival instituted to implore the friendly influence of Heaven on the fields, compounded with that of May 1, when the Druids kindled large fires on all their sacred places, such as Carn Bre, Carnmerellis, Calvadnack, etc., and on the tops of the cairns in honour of Bel, or Betinus, the name by which they distinguished the sun whose revolving course had again clothed the earth with beauty and diffused joy and gladness throughout creation.

"If we reflect upon the rooted animosity which subsisted between Roman and Druid, and that the latter on being expelled from their former residences formed, together with the miserable remnant of the Britons, an asylum in the naturally fortified parts of the island, we shall not be surprised at their customs having been faintly handed down through such a long succession of ages. That Cornwall was their retreat is sufficiently proved by the numberless remains of circular temples, countless cairns, bronze metal pillars, and beehive huts. It may, therefore, be clearly inferred that in this remote situation their observances were strictly carried out, and that the corrupted ceremonies we still practise are faint memorials of our British forefathers."

CHAPTER XVI.

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

AFTER what has been just written, showing the extent to which the survival of heathen sacrifices has reached in quite modern times, it seems the natural thing to consider the question of popular religious superstitions. But, as a preface to that part of our inquiry, an instance or two illustrative of the ignorance which still exists in country places upon religious matters may be useful.

The following has been sent me. A clergyman was appointed to a benefice some twenty years ago, where matters connected with the Church had been conducted in a very rough and ready style. When the first great festival occurred he was naturally anxious that the parish church should be decorated with some sort of taste, in place of having sprigs of evergreens poked in anywhere. Thus, round the font was placed a legend in Old English letters—perhaps not very easy for the rustics to decipher—“One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.” It so happened that there were three large landowners in the parish, and the old clerk, who had regarded the whole proceeding with suspicion, as an encroachment upon his province, said, pointing to the font, “Well, at anyrate the squires will like that.” The words were read to him. “Oh!” he replied, “I thought it was ‘One L., one F., one S.,’” mentioning each of the landed proprietors by name.

It is difficult to conceive anything more directly illustrative of the principles of popular Protestantism than this.

Even in a church the first idea was the glorification of the parochial notabilities; the last was the possibility of the decoration of the font relating to God, and His revelation and glory.

The next illustration is even more telling. About the middle of this century a church was built in a certain parish which had overgrown the accommodation provided by the old church. The donor of the new building was a certain retired tradesman, who by diligence had amassed a considerable fortune. We will call him at random Isaac Starkey. On the altar was a frontal bearing the sacred monogram I. H. S. There was a good deal of interest excited by the new church, and when it was opened a number of people went to see it. Among these was a lady of high social position. After looking round the interior of the building, and admiring this and that, she said, "Yes, the general effect is very nice, but there is one thing that I don't like." Looking towards the east end she added, "It was rather ostentatious of Mr. Starkey to put his initials in so prominent a place, and I didn't know that he had any other Christian name besides Isaac."

After this example of ignorance, which is strictly true, my readers will have no difficulty in accepting what I have to relate about popular superstitions which have remained as relics of past ages.

The following appeared in a Welsh magazine about thirty years ago, and I am indebted to the Rev. D. Silvan Evans, of Llanwrin Rectory, Machynlleth, for the translation:—

"Down to the last hundred years it was usual in many a district in Wales to burn candles in the parish church on the eve of All Souls, with a view of ascertaining what fortune would happen to the inquirers during the succeeding twelve months. These, consisting for the most part of

young women, resorted after dark to the church, each carrying a candle with her. At the appointed hour all the candles were lighted by the sexton, whose presence and services on the occasion were considered indispensable.

“The act of lighting the candles was accompanied by every expression of gravity and earnestness, and the young women watched with the greatest anxiety their respective candles to see how they burned. If a candle burned brightly and clearly it augured favourably for its owner, and signified that prosperity and happiness would be her lot. If it burned slowly and gloomily, and in an irregular or crackling manner, then the person whose property it was would surely meet with trouble and misfortunes of various kinds. If, however, the candle went out before it had burned to the socket, then its owner was regarded as about to die in the course of the year; and, as little doubt had they on the subject as if the Angel of Death were seen at that moment sealing her fate.

“But not only did they observe the general manner in which the candles burned, or draw prognostications from the light of each as a whole, but they marked carefully how each portion burned, and these portions were supposed to represent the different parts of the year, so that they pretended to divine the various phases of their lives during the ensuing twelve months.

“When the last candle was burnt out they all left the church, and, having walked two or three times round the building, they proceeded homewards to bed, without uttering a single word to anyone. Not a syllable was to be spoken from the time of their quitting the church until they awoke on the following morning. If they had spoken to anyone the whole charm would at once have been broken, and all their labour would have been utterly lost. During their sleep on that night their lovers would appear to them, even those whom they should wed when

the time was fulfilled which had been foretold by the fates."

It is this custom which Ellis Wynne refers to in his "Visions of the Sleeping Bard," first published in 1703.

Sometimes these candle divinations were attended with melancholy, and occasionally with ludicrous results.

Once in a church at Llangian, near Pwllheli, where my informant was curate for ten years, the candle of a young woman from the neighbourhood happened to go out when it was only half burnt. She implicitly accepted the omen, and took the whole affair to heart so much that she would not be comforted, and in less than three weeks she was a corpse.

In the same church, on a similar occasion, the following occurrence took place:—When all the diviners were in church, and all the candles on the point of burning out, a wag from the village resolved to go and frighten the credulous women. Accordingly he dressed himself in a white sheet, and proceeded, under cover of the darkness, towards the church door. The ground outside was much higher than the floor of the church, to reach which it was necessary to descend two or three steps. Having arrived at the door, the man leaned his back against it, that he might be prepared to encounter the women on their egress. The door was unfastened, and yielded to the weight of his person, and backwards he tumbled with a heavy crack into the church. If the divining women were terrified, much more was he himself, and hurt too. The bruises which he received from his fall compelled him to keep his bed for several weeks afterwards, and the annals of the village do not tell us that he ever repeated his experiment.

In some districts it was usual to observe these ceremonies on the eves of the parish festivals or wakes, instead of

All Saints' Eve, and on these occasions the women sometimes offered a few pence to the patron saint.

Having spoken of the village "Wake," it may be well to state here that originally it was held on the day of the saint to whom the church was dedicated, but as these festivities were often badly conducted, Convocation passed an Act in 1536 to restrain them, and to diminish their number. The Dedication Festival was ordered to be observed only on the first Sunday in October. Hence the severance of the wake from the day of the patron saint. Upon this subject reference may be made to Hazlitt's edition of Brand, vol. iii. 3. In illustration of this, the Rev. A. Atkinson, Vicar of Audlem, Cheshire, has written as follows:—"Our Saints' Day is St. James' (July 25), but our village wake is held early in October, 'Wake Sunday' being that nearest to October 2, and the wake is held on the week following."

The same gentleman who was kind enough to send me the account of the divination by candles, related above, has also told me that in some parts of Wales there is a strange idea prevailing amongst the people that if a person goes alone to the church door just before midnight on the last night of the year, and puts his ear to the keyhole, a voice from within will inform him of the principal occurrences which will take place in the parish in the course of the year which is about to begin. These will chiefly relate to marriages and deaths. Should he take anybody with him when he goes to listen, no revelation will be made to him.

In the parish of Marston St. Lawrence, Northamptonshire, there used to be a notion very prevalent that rainwater collected on Holy Thursday was of powerful efficacy in all diseases of the eyes.

Another curious idea in connection with Ascension Day was related by a correspondent to the *Echo* newspaper of May 24, 1879. He wrote as follows:—

“On Thursday (Ascension Day) the Bethesda Slate Quarries were entirely closed, not, however, out of respect to the religious character of the day, but in deference to a superstition which has lingered for many years amongst the Penrhyn quarrymen, that working on Ascension Day was sure to be attended with a fatality or accident of a serious character. Some six years back, the management succeeded in partly overcoming this feeling, and several of the men worked, an arrangement which was continued about two years. Strange to say, there was always an accident, and Ascension Day continues to be an idle day so far as the Penrhyn quarrymen are concerned.”

Most people have heard by tradition of the divination by Bible and Key. Here is a curious instance mentioned by a correspondent to *Notes and Queries*, who wrote from Godalming :—“When any article is supposed to have been stolen, a Bible is produced, and opened at the first chapter of Ruth. The stock of the street door key is placed on the sixteenth verse of the above chapter, the handle protruding from the edge of the Bible, and the key is secured in this position by a string bound tightly round the book. The person who works the charm then places his two middle fingers under the handle of the key, and this keeps the Bible suspended. He then repeats in succession the names of the persons suspected of the theft, quoting at each name a portion of the verse on which the key is placed, beginning, ‘Whither thou goest I will go,’ etc. When the name of the guilty person is pronounced, the key turns off the finger, and the Bible falls to the ground. Thus the guilt of the supposed thief is determined. The belief of some of the more ignorant of the lower orders in this charm is unbounded. I have seen,” says the writer, “this practised in other counties, the key being placed over Proverbs xix. 5.”

In Brand's book (ed. Ellis) it is stated that the key was placed upon Psalm cl.

The Vicar of Godalming has told me that he has not heard of any such custom in his parish; but yet I have no right to suppose that the usage may not have been as stated by the writer quoted above.

Somewhat akin to this is a custom which used to be common in Suffolk, and which possibly exists in out of the way places still. On New Year's Eve it was the practice to open a Bible at midnight, and to stick a pin into the page at haphazard. The verse indicated by the pin was supposed to show whether the experimenter would have good or bad luck during the incoming year.

We will now pass on to consider the popular superstitions which cluster round the Holy Eucharist.

Mr. Henderson says that a belief in the efficacy of the sacred Species in the Eucharist for the cure of bodily disease is widely spread throughout the north. A clergyman has informed him that he knows of one Element having been secreted for that purpose, and that he has found it necessary to watch persons who appeared to have such an intention.

A clergyman at Birmingham wrote to me only last year to say that at a parish in Kent, where his father is rector, "there is a superstition that if, instead of eating the Sacramental Bread it is taken away and a walk taken with it three times round the church, the devil will be encountered at the end of the third journey, who will ask for the Bread; having received which, the giver is completely in his power for the remainder of his life."

After such a grossly sacrilegious act I can quite believe that the popular idea would come true.

It is evident that abominations of this kind were not uncommon in pre-Reformation days, otherwise how are we

to interpret the meaning of the following rubric in Edward VI.'s First Prayer Book?

"And although it be redde in auncient writers that the people many yeares past received at the Priestes handes the Sacrament of the Body of Christ in theyr owne handes. and no commandment of Christ to the contrary: Yet forasmuche as they many tymes conveyehed the same secretelye awaye, kept it with them, and diversly abused it to the supersticion and wickednes: lest any suche thyng hereafter should be attempted, and that an uniformitie might be used throughoute the whole Realme: it is thought convenient the people commonly receive the Sacrament of Christes body, in their mouthes, at the Priestes hande."

A Herefordshire clergyman tells me that he recently had a request from a Dissenter for what the applicant called "A Sacrament Shilling"—*i.e.* a shilling given during the offertory at Holy Communion—to buy a ring to cure a girl of fits. The shilling was to be paid for in coppers.

To show how widely spread this idea was, yet with a slight variation in the matter of practical detail, we will go to Lincolnshire. The vicar of a parish in that county has told me that he was once asked by a woman, who was a Primitive Methodist, to give her a shilling of "Sacrament Money" (as she called it) in exchange for another shilling, because her son had epileptic fits, and she had heard that if a "Sacrament piece of silver" were hung round his neck it would cure him.

From the east of England we will turn westwards. The late Colonel Bagnall, when he was churchwarden of West Bromwich, told me, some ten years ago, that there, until quite lately, it was the custom for rheumatic people to apply to the vicar for a "Sacrament shilling" to rub on the limb where the pain was in order to cure it.

In Hampshire, also, writes Mr. F. M. Middleton, the country people believe that a healing power exists in the alms collected at the Holy Communion.¹

One more instance from a place far distant from the last. A lady residing near Shrewsbury has written to me to say that she remembers a woman, a churchwoman this time, I presume, whose child was afflicted with fits, coming to her and saying that if the parson would but give her a "Sacrament shilling" it would cure him directly. She would make a hole in it, and hang it round his neck, and he would never have another fit.

To pass on to other supposed curative agencies. It is probable that the following usage will be new to most of my readers.

In one of the principal towns in Yorkshire, at the beginning of the present century, it was the practice of persons in what is called a "respectable" class of life, to take their children when afflicted with whooping-cough to a neighbouring convent, where the priest allowed them to drink a small quantity of holy water out of a silver chalice, which the little sufferers were forbidden to touch. This was regarded as a remedy by Roman Catholic and Protestant parents alike.²

Mr. Henderson tells us of a piece of one of the statues on the west front of Exeter Cathedral, having been knocked off within the last thirty years or so. This was in order that the stone might be pounded up and mixed with lard to make an ointment for the supposed cure of sores. It was called "Peter's Stone," and a man is known to have walked from Teignmouth, a distance of eighteen miles at least, and to have flung stones at the figures until he

¹ *Notes and Queries*, Dec., 24, 1853.

² *Ibid.*, March 22, 1851.

brought down the arm of one of them, in order to get the stone for the above purpose.¹

A somewhat similar piece of credulous Vandalism formerly took place in the church of Penmynydd, in connection with a fourteenth century tomb of alabaster. The relic has been seriously damaged by the inhabitants, who believed that portions of it, when ground, were good for sore eyes.²

Here is another instance. At Clynnog church, in the diocese of Bangor, there is a chapel dedicated to St. Benno, the founder, to which attaches the belief that the powdered scrapings of the stone columns are efficacious as a sovereign cure in cases of eye disease. A pinch of this powder is added to a bottle of spring water, and thus a collyrium is made, which is duly applied with all faith in its healing virtues.³

Some kind friend has sent me a cutting from *Notes and Queries*, but has merely mentioned that it appeared in 1882. As I have not the volume at hand I cannot give the exact reference. It relates to a bit of Surrey church folklore in connection with a supposed remedy for shingles.

The writer says that the other day he inquired of his farm man the reason of the carter's boy's absence. The man replied, "He has got the shingles, and I have told his father to get the coomb (as he pronounced it) off the church bells, and rub the boy with it. They say it is the best thing for it." He then added, "If the shingles meets all round you it's most sure to kill you." The writer expresses his regret that the father did not follow the advice, but cured the boy with the more commonplace remedy of ink. The coomb, as the farm bailiff called it, is

¹ "Folklore," p. 156.

² *Archæological Journal*, vol. i., p. 127 (1845).

³ *Notes and Queries*, Nov. 15, 1873.

a sort of secretion of moss which gathers on old bells when they are exposed to damp.

I believe that I am correct in saying, that as a matter of fact, the shingles, though a troublesome malady, never do entirely compass the body of the person who is attacked by them; and even if they did, I cannot see that any serious mischief would be likely to ensue.

A lady at Torquay, who has been good enough to send me some valuable notes relative to church folklore, has told me that at Morchard Bishop in North Devon a cup of dew collected in the churchyard on May morning was formerly thought good for a person in consumption. She remembers an instance in which it was obtained and applied.

In a former chapter mention was made of the custom in the north of England of carrying round "Advent Images." These dressed dolls were surrounded with evergreen leaves, and everybody to whom the figures were shown was allowed to take a leaf. This was carefully preserved, and was regarded as a sovereign remedy for toothache.

The "touching" for the king's evil or scrofula, ought, by right, to have come first amongst what are commonly called the "Healing Superstitions," which were current amongst our forefathers. It will, I believe, interest some of my readers if I give the text of the service, which, with more or less variation was commonly used. The version which I print is that given by Maskell in his *Monumenta Ritualia*. But it may be interesting if I first give a few details respecting this odd bit of old-world credulousness.

It is said that Clovis was the first monarch who adopted this method in 481, and the use was continued at intervals. The first who practised it in England was Edward the Confessor, in 1058. Henry II. "touched," and so did Edward II., and Edward III., and Richard II. Henry VII. revived the custom, and Henry VIII. continued it.

And so, onwards. Charles II. seems to have been a most skilful manipulator, and he is said to have "touched" 92,107 persons during his reign, most of whom, according to the king's physician, were cured. Queen Anne seems to have been the last who administered the royal "touch." George I. believed in very little, and least of all in the efficacy of the royal privilege of curing scrofula, and the practice has been abandoned since 1714.

The following form is believed to be the one used by Henry VII. It was reprinted as it stands below "by His Majesty's command in 1686." Mr. Maskell tells us that "the form, entirely in English, prayers as well as rubrics, occur often in the Common Prayer Books of the reigns of Charles I. and II., James II. and Queen Anne. It was also printed separately in the reign of James II. These English forms all vary, and a new one appears to have been drawn up for each sovereign. Bishop Sparrow reprinted that of the reign of Charles II."

The form is as follows :—

THE CEREMONIES FOR THE HEALING OF THEM THAT BE DISEASED WITH THE KING'S EVIL, AS THEY WERE PRACTISED IN THE REIGN OF KING HENRY VII.

First the king, kneeling, shall begin and say :

In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

And so soon as he hath said this he shall say :

Benedicite.

The chaplain, kneeling before the king, having a stole about his neck, shall answer and say :

Dominus sit in corde tuo et labiis tuis, ad confitendum omnia peccata tua ; in Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Or else to say :

Jesus nos exaudiat, in Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Then by and by the king shall say :

Confiteor Deo, beatæ Mariæ Virgini, omnibus sanctis, et vobis, quia peccavi nimis in cogitatione, locutione, et opere, mea culpa. Precor sanctam Mariam, omnes sanctos Dei, et vos orare pro me.

The chaplain shall answer and say :

Misereatur vestri omnipotens Deus et dimittat vobis omnia peccata vestra, liberet vos ab omni malo, salvet et confirmet in bono, et ad vitam perducatur eternam. Amen.

Absolutionem et remissionem omnium peccatorum vestrorum, spatium vero pænitiæ et emendationem vitæ, gratiam et consolationem Sancti Spiritus, tribuat vobis omnipotens et miseracors Dominus. Amen.

This done, the chaplain shall say :

Dominus vobiscum.

The king shall answer :

Et cum spiritu tuo.

The chaplain :

Sequentia sancti evangelii secundum Marcum.

The king shall answer :

Gloria tibi Domine.

The chaplain shall read the gospel.¹

In illo tempore. Recumbentibus undecem discipulis . . . nocebit. Super ægros manus imponent, et bene habebunt.

Which clause, Super ægros, etc., the chaplain repeats as long as the king is handling the sick person. And in the time of the repeating the aforesaid words, Super ægros, etc., the clerk of the closet shall kneel before the king, having the sick person upon the right hand, and the sick person shall likewise kneel before the king ; and the king shall lay his hand upon the sore of the sick person.

This done, the chaplain shall make an end of the gospel ;

¹ St. Mark xvi. 14-18.

*and in the meantime the chirurgeon shall lead away the sick person from the king.*¹

Et Dominus quidem Jesus, postquam . . . sequentibus signis.

Then the chaplain shall begin to say again :

Dominus vobiscum.

The king shall answer :

Et cum spiritu tuo.

The chaplain :

Initium sancti evangelii secundum Ioannem.

The king shall say :

Gloria tibi Domine.

The chaplain shall then say this gospel following :

In principio erat Verbum . . . in hunc mundum.

Which last clause, Erat lux vera, etc., shall still be repeated so long as the king shall be crossing the sore of the sick person with an Angel Noble ; and the sick person to have the same angel hanged about his neck, and to wear it until he be full whole.

This done, the chirurgeon shall lead away the sick person as he did before ; and then the chaplain shall make an end to the gospel.

In mundo erat, et mundus per ipsum factus est ; plenum gratiæ et veritatis.

Then the chaplain shall say :

Sit nomen Domini benedictum.

The king shall answer :

Et hoc nunc, et usque in sæculum.

Then shall the chaplain say this collect following, praying for the sick person or persons :

Domine exaudi orationem meam.

The king shall answer :

Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

Oremus.

¹ St. Mark xvi. 19.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, salus eterna credentium, exaudi nos pro famulis tuis, pro quibus miseracordio tuo imploramus auxilium, ut reddita tibi sanitate, gratiarum tibi in ecclesia tua referent actiones. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

This prayer is to be said secretly after the sick persons are departed from the king, at his pleasure :

Dominator Domine, Deus omnipotens, cujus benedignitate, cæci vident, surdi audiunt, muti loquentur, claudi ambulat, leprosi mundantur, omnes infirmorum curantur languores, et a quo solo donum sanitationis humano generi etiam tribuitur, et tanta gratia pro incredibili tua erga hoc regnum bonitate, regibus ejusdem concessa est, at sola manuum illorum impositione, morbus gravissimus fœditissimusque depellatur, concede propitius ut tibi propterea gratias agamus, et pro isto singulari beneficio in nos collato non nobis ipsis, sed nomini tuo assidue gloriam demus, nosque sic ad pietatam semper exerceamus, ut tuam nobis donatam gratiam non solum diligenter conservare, sed in dies magis magisque adaugere laboremus, et præsta, ut quorum cunque corporibus, in nomine tuo manus imposuimus, hac tua virtute in illis operante et nobis ministrantibus ad pristinam sanitatem restituantur, eam conservent, et pro eadem tibi, ut summo medico et omnium morborum depulsori, perpetuo nobis cum gratias agant: sicque deinceps vitam instituant ut non corpus solum ab infirmitate, sed anima etiam a peccato omnino sanata videatur. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Sancti Spiritus per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

Having dealt with certain superstitious usages in cases of sickness, two or three of those connected with death will be interesting. The following is odd enough, an M.D. writes:—"An old woman of my acquaintance who acted

as beadle, or 'bobber' of a church once brought to the bed of a dying person some of the sweepings of the floor by the altar to ease and shorten a very lingering death."¹

The Vicar of Winchcombe has stated to me that about three years ago an old woman died of dropsy in his parish. As her body swelled to a great extent, one of the family was sent to the sexton to ask for a small piece of turf from the old churchyard to place on her body to prevent it swelling any more. He was very particular that the turf should be taken from the old churchyard, now disused, and not from the new burying-place, which had been open for some twenty-five years or more. His request was granted.

Here is another curious idea. A contributor to *Notes and Queries* states that when he was at Charlcombe, near Bath, in 1852, the parish clerk requested the loan of the Paten from the clergyman. Being asked for what purpose, he said he wanted it to put salt in it, and to lay it on the breast of a dying person to make him die easier.

A medical man whilst in practice at Howden in Northumberland was called in some years ago to prescribe for an infant suffering from the sins of its progenitors. It was supposed to be fast passing away, and he found the little one with a lighted candle in its hand, held there by the mother. What could be the meaning of this? From a letter written to Sir Thomas Chaloner in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and quoted in Walbran's "Visitors' Guide to Redcar," after describing the song of the dead man's journey, as given in Aubrey, the writer adds:—"An other practice of theirs is more redyculous than the former, for when any maydes take the pottes off the fyer in great haste, she settes yt down, and without feare of burnings clappes her handes on the pot hookes to stay them from shakinge; and this she doth for tender heart,

¹ *Notes and Queries*, Dec. 16, 1871.

believing that our lady wepeth, or greelith, as they term yt all the while the pot hookes waggles, which were a lamentable case."

Of course there is any amount of folklore about witches, and I here give the following, which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1759:—

"One Susanah Hannokes, an elderly woman of Wingrove, near Aylesbury, was accused by her neighbour of bewitching her spinning wheel, so that she could not make it go round, and offered to make oath of it before a magistrate; on which the husband, to justify his wife, insisted upon her being tried by the church Bible, and that the accuser should be present. Accordingly she was conducted to the parish church, where she was stripped of all her cloathes to her shift and undercoat, and weighed against the Bible; when, to the no small mortification of her accuser, she outweighed it, and was honourably acquitted of the charge."

Mr. S. J. Wills, from whom I have received many interesting and valuable notes relative to Cornish customs, has told me about a certain Mr. Jago, an eccentric clergyman, who was vicar of Wendron, in the latter part of the last century. This gentleman was supposed to exercise supernatural power, and the various stories related of him were firmly believed by the simple country folk. He was credited with the questionable art of laying spirits; discovering thieves by magic, etc. It is said that when he alighted from his horse he would strike the ground with a whip, and a demon would instantly appear to take charge of the animal until he should want it again. Numerous stories are even yet circulated respecting his exploits.

In the August number of the *Newbery House Magazine*

1891, the Rev. H. J. Wilmot Buxton gave a few "Stray Notes from North Devon" bearing upon popular superstitions in that part of the country. He tells us that if the church clock strikes during the singing of a hymn in the service, it is believed that some one will die in the parish within the week, and that the same result will follow if the congregations of the Church, and of the dissenting place of worship meet outside. Once, he says, when an aged woman lingered long in dying, another old woman of the parish gravely assured the nurse that the spirit of the dying person could never go as long as the window was closed. I have already mentioned this idea. Belief in witches, ghosts, and evil spirits is not altogether extinct, though probably from fear of exciting ridicule is seldom openly spoken of. Still neighbours occasionally fall out because some old woman credited with the "evil eye" has "overlooked" them, or perhaps has done the same un-neighbourly thing towards the cherished "peg," as they pronounce the word pig. There are persons still extant who add to their qualifications that of being "white witches," to whom the "overlooked" one goes for help and advice. It was at Bideford that the last execution for witchcraft in England took place in 1682. "Tilling," *i.e.* sowing parsley, is a task which a man undertakes very unwillingly; it is notoriously an unlucky thing to do, and so he somewhat selfishly leaves it to his "missus." Some people dislike to have those fair spring blooms the daffodils, or Lent lilies, in their houses, and carefully exterminate all luckless kittens born in May, or they will, if preserved, bring snakes indoors.

There are folks on Dartmoor who firmly believe in being "pixie-led." Without doubt there is a strong tincture of superstition in the nature of west country people. In a parish well known to the writer a man was annoyed by mysterious noises in his chimney night after night, and he

became so frightened that he sent for the parson to exorcise the evil spirit ; but this was effectually done by a neighbour who set a trap, and caught a poor harmless owl whose snorings and hissings had troubled the uneasy conscience of the cottager.

APPENDIX I.

The Public Church Services performed in London at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century; as given in Paterson's "*Pietas Londinensis*."

Aylesbury Chapel, St. John's Close—Wednesdays and holydays at 10 a.m.

Alban, St., Wood Street and St. Olive, Cripplegate—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

All Saints, or Allhallows, Barking, Tower Street—Daily at 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. Holy Communion every Sunday at 12.

All Saints, or Allhallows, Bread Street, and St. John the Evangelist—Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, all holydays at 11 a.m.

All Saints, or Allhallows the Great and the Less, Thames Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, holydays, and public days at 11 a.m.

All Saints, or Allhallows, Lombard Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

All Saints, or Allhallows, London Wall—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

All Saints, or Allhallows, Staining Lane—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Alphage, St., Cripplegate—Wednesdays, Fridays, holydays, and public days at 11 a.m.

Andrews, St., Holborn—Daily; Summer, 6; Winter, 7 and

11 a.m., and 3 p.m. Holy Communion every Sunday at 12, and several occasions. Easter Day, 7 a.m. and 12.

Andrew, St., Undershaft, or St. Mary at Axe—Daily; Summer, 6; Winter, 7 and 11 a.m., and 6 p.m.

Andrew, St., Wardrobe, and St. Anne's, Blackfriars—Wednesdays, Fridays, all holy and public days at 11 a.m.

Anne and Agnes, Sts.—Wednesdays, Fridays, all holy and public days at 11 a.m. Holy Communion three last Sundays in the month.

Anne, St., Soho—Daily; Summer, 6; Winter, 7 and 11 a.m., and 4 and 6 p.m. Holy Communion, first and third Sundays, and Good Friday at 12; Christmas, Easter, Whitsunday at 7 a.m. and 12.

Anthony or Antholine, St., Watling Street, and St. John Baptist—Daily; Summer, 6; Winter, 7 a.m.

Augustine or Austin, St., Old Change—Wednesday, Friday, holy and public days at 11 a.m.

Bartholemew, St., the Great—Daily in the last week in the month at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Bartholemew, St., the Less—Daily at 11 a.m.

Bartholemew, St., the Little, near the Royal Exchange—Wednesdays, Fridays, holydays, and public days at 11 a.m., and daily, 6 p.m.

Berwick Street Chapel, Soho—Daily at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Benedict, St., or St. Bennet Fink, Threadneedle Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Benedict or Bennet, St., Gracechurch Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, all holy and public days at 11 a.m.

Benedict or Bennet, St., and St. Peter, Paul's Wharf—Wednesdays, Fridays, and all holy and public days at 11 a.m.; Evening only on holydays and Saturdays at 3.

Bloomsbury Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Holy Communion on the third Sunday in the month.

Botolph, St., Aldersgate—Daily at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Botolph, St., Aldgate—Daily at 11 a.m.; Summer, 7; Winter, 8 p.m.; Wednesday Evening always at 6.

Botolph, St., Bishopsgate—Daily at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Bridget or Brides, St., Fleet Street—Daily at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Bridewell Chapel—Holy Communion on the third Sunday in the month.

Charterhouse Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m.; Summer, 5; Winter, 2 p.m.

Christ Church, Newgate Street, and St. Leonards, Foster Lane—Daily at 11 a.m.; Summer, 5; Winter, 3 p.m.

Christ Church, Surrey—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Christopher, St., Threadneedle Street—Daily at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Clement Danes, St., Strand—Daily at 11 a.m., and 3 and 8 p.m.; Sundays, 3 and 7 p.m. Holy Communion every Sunday, besides other times.

Clement, St., St. Clement's Lane, City—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Dionyse, or Dionis, or Dionis Back Church, or St. Dennis, or Dionysius the Areopagite—Daily; Summer, 8; Winter, 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Drapers' Almshouse Chapel, St. George's Fields—Daily; Summer, 8; Winter, 9 a.m.

N.B.—The Liturgy is not used in this chapel, but a form of prayer, because the foundation will not support a chaplain. The inhabitants attend the Mother Church on Sundays, and at some other times. There is another chapel at Newington Butts belonging to an almshouse built by the same founder, Mr. John Walter, citizen and draper.

Duke Street Chapel, St. James' Park—Daily at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Holy Communion every Sunday and holyday.

Dunstan, St., in the East—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Dunstan, St., Stepney—Daily at 11 a.m.; Summer, 6; Winter, 3 p.m. Holy Communion first and second Sundays in the month.

Dunstan's, St., in the West—Daily at 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.; on Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days again at 11 a.m. Holy Communion every Sunday and holyday at 12; every day for a week after Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday at 8 after morning prayers.

Edmund, St., the King and Martyr, Lombard Street—Daily at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Ely House Chapel (if the Bishop is resident)—Daily at 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. On Sundays, holy, and public days again at 11 a.m.

Ethelburga or Ethelburgh, St., Bishopsgate Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Fleet Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.; but on Sundays and holydays at 10 a.m. Holy Communion, besides the usual times, before Michaelmas Term.

George, St., Bloomsbury—Daily at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Holy Communion every Sunday, Good Friday, New Year's Day, and other solemn days.

George, St., Botolph Lane—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

George, St., the Martyr, Southwark—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days at 10 a.m.

Giles', St., Cripplegate—On Litany and holydays at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Giles', St., in the Fields—Daily at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Holy Communion first and second Sundays in the month after prayers at 7, and some other occasions.

Gray Coat Hospital Chapel, Westminster—Daily at 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Gray's Inn Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m.; Summer, 5; Winter,

3 p.m. Holy Communion twice a term, besides Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide.

Helen, St., the Great, Bishopsgate Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Hog Lane Chapel, Monmouth Street—Daily at 11 a.m.

Horse Guards Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m.

Hoxton Hospital Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m.; Summer, 5; Winter, 3 p.m. Holy Communion last Sunday in the month, and other solemn occasions.

James, St., Clerkenwell—Daily at 11 a.m.; Saturday only at 2 p.m.

James, St., Chapel, or Chapel Royal—Daily at 8 and 11 a.m., and 5 p.m.

N.B.—During her Majesty's absence only at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Holy Communion twice every Sunday when the Queen is resident, otherwise, once.

James, St., in Duke's Place, Aldgate—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11. Holy Communion, second Sunday in the month.

James, St., Thames Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

James, St., Westminster—Daily; Summer, 6; Winter, 7 and 11 a.m., and 3 and 6 p.m. Holy Communion, second Sunday in the month; every Sunday from Palm Sunday to Trinity Sunday, New Year's Day, and other great days, twice.

John, St., of Jerusalem, Hackney—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays, at 11 a.m.

John, St., Wapping—Daily; Summer, 8; Winter, 9 a.m. Summer, 5; Winter, 3 p.m.

Islington Almshouse Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Katharine, St., Coleman—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Katharine, St., Cree—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy-days, at 10 a.m. On Saturdays, Summer, 4; Winter, 3 p.m.

Katharine, St., by the Tower—Daily, at 11 a.m.

King Street Chapel, St. James'—Daily; Summer, 6; Winter, 7 and 11 a.m., and 3 and 6 p.m. Holy Communion last Sunday in the month.

Lambeth Chapel—Daily; Summer, 7; Winter, 8 and 12 a.m., and 2 and 9 p.m.

Lamb's Chapel, Hart Street, Cripplegate—Wednesdays and Fridays at 8 a.m. Holy Communion never administered.

Laurence, St., Jewry—Daily at 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. On Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays again at 11 a.m. On Thursday evening again, at 3 p.m. Holy Communion every Sunday at 8, except the first, then at 12.

Leonard, St., Shoreditch—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy, and state days at 11 a.m.

Lincoln Inn Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Holy Communion, Christmas, Easter, second Sunday in September, and first and last Sunday of every term.

London Workhouse Chapel, Bishopsgate Street—Daily at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Ludgate Prison Chapel—Daily at 10 a.m. N.B.—Sixpence allowed each time. The most prudent layman reads if no clergyman is in prison.

Magnus, St., London Bridge—Daily at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Margaret, St., Lothbury—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy-days at 11 a.m.

Margaret, St., Pattens—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy-days at 11 a.m.

Margaret, St., Westminster—Fridays, holy and state days at 10 a.m.; but daily, Summer, 6; Winter, 7 p.m.

Marshalsea, Chapel of—Wednesdays and Saturdays at 3 p.m.

Martin, St.—Daily ; Summer, 6 ; Winter, 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. ; on Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays again at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Holy Communion, first Sunday, Christmas Day, Easter, and Whitsunday, twice ; but the rest of the Sundays, New Year's Day, Good Friday, and Ascension Day, once.

Martin, St., Ludgate—Daily at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Martin, St., Dutewitch, or Otterwick—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Mary, St., Abchurch—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m. Holydays and on Saturdays at 4 p.m.

Mary, St., Aldermanbury—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Mary, St., Aldermary—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Mary, St., le Bow—Daily at 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Holy Communion every holyday at 8 a.m.

Mary, St., at Hill—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m., and on Saturdays and holydays at 3 p.m.

Mary, St., Islington—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m., and on Saturdays and holydays at 3 p.m.

Mary, St., Lambeth—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at half-past 10 a.m. ; Saturday at 3 p.m. ; everyday in Lent at 11 a.m. Holy Communion, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and other solemnities, besides the regular.

Mary Magdalene, St., Bermondsey—Daily at 11 a.m. Holy Communion twice on all holydays which fall on the 1st Sunday, and Christmas Day, Easter Day, and Whitsunday.

Mary Magdalene, St., Old Fish Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m. ; and on Saturdays in Lent at 3 p.m.

Mary, St., Newington Butts—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy and public days at 11 a.m.

Mary, St., Rotherhithe—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy-

days, and Saturdays before Communion at 11 a.m. Holy Communion, second Sunday.

Mary, St., le Savoy—Daily; Summer, 7; Winter, 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. On Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays again at 10 a.m. Holy Communion on 1st Sunday twice, 7 and 12.

Mary, St., Somerset—Holy and public days at 11 a.m.

Mary, St., Whitechapel—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days at 11 a.m.; Saturdays at 3 p.m.; Holy Communion every Sunday, all holydays, Monday and Tuesday in Easter Week, Easter Day, Whitsunday, Good Friday, Christmas day, and Ash Wednesday.

Mary, St., Woolnoth—Daily at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Matthew, St., Friday Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days at 10 a.m. Holy Communion 1st Sunday twice; on all holydays at 10.

Michael, St., Basinghall—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days at 11 a.m.; daily at 5 p.m.

Michael, St., Cornhill—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days at 11 a.m.

Michael, St., Crooked Lane—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy and public days at 11 a.m.

Michael, St., Queenhithe—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days at 11 a.m. Daily at 6 p.m.

Michael, St., Royal—Wednesdays and Saturdays at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Michael, St., Wood Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Mildred, St., Bread Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Mildred, St., Poultry—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

New Chapel, Westminster—Daily at 9 a.m., and 3, 4, and 5 p.m., as the days lengthen.

Newgate Chapel—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 10 a.m. During the eight sessions daily, at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Nicholas, St., Coleabby—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and state days at 11 a.m.

Olave, St., Hart Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holy and state days at 11 a.m. Sundays in Lent at 3 p.m.

Olave, St., Jewry—Holy and public days, and on Wednesday and Friday, from October to May, at 11 a.m.

Olave, St., Southwark—Wednesday, Friday, and holy and public days at 11 a.m. Saturdays at 3 p.m.

Oxenden Chapel, Haymarket—Daily at 10 a.m. No Communion.

Palmer's, Mrs., Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m.

Paul's, St., Cathedral—Daily; Summer, 6; Winter, 7 and 11 a.m., and 3 p.m. Holy Communion every Sunday.

Paul's, St., Covent Garden—Daily; Summer, 6; Winter, 7 and 10 a.m., and 3 and 6 p.m. Holy Communion, 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month, and other occasions.

Paul's, St., Shadwell—Daily at 11 a.m.; Summer, 5, Winter, 3 p.m.

Pest House Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Peter, St., Cornhill—Daily at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Holy Communion every Sunday.

Peter, St., Chapel, St. Peter's Hospital—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays.

N.B.—The keeper of the hospital reads till means can be provided to support a minister.

Peter, St., Poor, Broad Street—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Peter, St., in the Tower—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m.

Peter, St., *alias* Westminster Abbey—Daily at Summer, 6; Winter, 7 and 10 a.m., and 3 p.m.

Poplar Chapel—Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 11 a.m. Holy Communion third Sunday at 1 p.m.

Prison of Queen's Bench Chapel—Daily at 7 p.m.

Queen Square Chapel, Westminster—Daily at 11 a.m., and 4 p.m. in Winter; only on Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays in the Summer; but evenings always.

Queen Street Great Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Holy Communion last Sunday in the month.

Rolls Chapel—Holydays at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Holy Communion seven times a year.

Saviour, St., or St. Mary Overie, Southwark—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days at 11 a.m.

Sepulchre, St., Snow Hill—Daily Summer, 6; Winter, 7 a.m.; and Summer, 3; Winter, 4 p.m. On Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days again at 11 a.m. Holy Communion first Sunday, and every Sunday from Easter to Trinity.

Skinner's Alms House Chapel, Mile End—Daily at 11 a.m.

Somerset House Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Holy Communion third Sunday in the month.

Stephen, St., Coleman Street—Daily at 11 a.m. Holy Communion every Sunday.

Stephen, St. Walbrook—Daily at 11 a.m., and on Saturdays in Lent 4 p.m.

Stratford-le-Bow—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and state days at 11 a.m.

Swithene, St., Cannon Street—Daily at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Temple Church—Daily at 7, or 8, or 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Thomas, St., Southwark—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m. Holy Communion, second Sunday.

Thomas, St., Hospital Chapel—Daily at 3 p.m.

Trinity Chapel, Bond Street—Daily at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Holy Communion third Sunday.

Trinity in the Little Minories—Holy and public days, and in Lent on Wednesdays and Fridays at 11 a.m.

Vedast, or St. Foster—Wednesdays, Fridays, and holydays at 11 a.m. Evening daily at 6 p.m.

Vintner's Alms-houses Chapel—Wednesdays, Fridays, holy and public days at 11 a.m.

Whitehall Chapel—Daily at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Holy Communion privately every Sunday, but publicly on the first Sunday.

It is well that the foregoing list should be compared with a record of "Daily Prayers in and about the City (1683)," quoted from a book of that date in No. 84 of the *Tracts for the Times*, by the Rev. Thomas Keble.

	M.	E.		M.	E.
King's Chapel			St. Christopher's	6	6
Duke's Chapel	6		St. Martin's	6	5
Westminster Abbey	and	4	Tabernacle	9	3
Ely House	10		St. Paul's, Covent Garden	10	3
Temple			St. Martin's, Ludgate	9	3
Lincoln's Inn	8	4	St. Diony's, Backchurch	8	5
Gray's Inn			St. Andrew, Undershaft	—	6
St. James', Clerkenwell	10		St. Antholin's		6
Charter House	11	4	St. Sepulchre's	—	
			St. Mary, Woolnoth	11	—

Those who are interested in this question of Daily Services in London churches, and would care to institute a comparison between the list given in "*Pietas Londinensis*," and the record which they will find in a book entitled "*London Parishes*," an account of the churches, vicars, vestries, etc., published in 1824, are advised to consult that volume.

APPENDIX II.

ODD CHRISTIAN NAMES.

IN the year 1892 there appeared in the columns of the *Standard* newspaper a correspondence on the subject of odd Christian names, and the examples given are, in many instances, so extraordinary that they are well worth putting on record in a more permanent manner than would be the case if they were allowed to remain buried in a file of a daily paper. The fact that in most cases the correspondent gives his name and address, and his authority for the statements which he makes, renders the information afforded by the several writers all the more valuable. The examples of out-of-the-way Christian names which have from time to time been given to infants at the font would seem to form no unimportant item in Church Folklore, and I believe that such a list as that below is quite unique.

To begin with a letter from the Rev. A. L. Foulkes, Vicar of Steventon, Berkshire, dated April 4, 1892. Referring to his parish registers, he says, that during the last five years or so, there has been a revival of floral names, which he attributes to the increased pains which have been taken in the church decorations at Easter and Whitsuntide.

The vicar says :—

“I have baptised since April, 1887, three ‘Violets,’ one ‘Lily Rose,’ one ‘Vera Rose’ (a unique beauty of a name), two ‘Lilys,’ one ‘May,’ one ‘Ivy,’ one ‘Daisy’; and in 1886 I notice three ‘Roses,’ and we have two ‘Daisys’ and three

'Mays' besides in our Sunday school. And, looking back over two or three decades in the register, I find plenty of Scriptural names. You may see the names : Jabez, Eber, Shadrach, Jeremiah, Noah, Moses, Elijah, Eli, Israel, Peter, Enoch, Levi, Caleb, Daniel, more than once since 1845, and many Jesses and Josephs, and last, but not least Biblical, Andrew Zacharias, and one whose parents must have thought of the 'lost tribes' in the Hanoverian days—George Gad.

"Amongst females, I find Grace, Patience, Ada, Thyrsa, Mercy, Sebia (feminine of Seba), Constance, Christiana, Naomi. We have such names as Ambrose, Irene, Selina, Cyril, Inkerman, and Alma, during the same period. Speaking of Scriptural names, I knew a clergyman who refused to baptise in the mysterious name Melchisedek, but if I searched I might find even that. It is certainly to be noted that floral names have much increased in this parish during the last few years."

A gentleman writing from East Dereham, Norfolk, states that:—"In this town there is an innkeeper who rejoices in the baptismal name of 'Mahershalalhashbaz' (see Isaiah viii. 1). I should think this is unique. He is commonly called 'Maher,' but in the parochial and other lists the full name appears.

"Report says (but I will not vouch for its truth) that his father wished him to be named 'Uz,' but on the clergyman remonstrating he immediately said, 'Then we will have the other,' and produced from his pocket a slip of paper with the longer name."

As to Scriptural names, it would, I think, be difficult to find another instance of a man who had been christened "Prophet Elijah" (Jaggard), yet Mr. F. N. Gray, writing from the Orlean's Club, Brighton, states that one of General

Hall's gamekeepers at Six Mile Bottom was so named, and he was commonly addressed as "Prop. Jaggard" for short.

The following is odd enough. "A vicar" writes:—"A few weeks ago, at the baptism of a baby, the names 'Azilé Pauline' were given me. Not knowing or recognising the first name, I asked that it might be spelt. Not being much enlightened, but imagining it might be some French name to go with the second, which was pronounced with the French accent, I baptised the baby with those names. On asking the mother after the service where she had got the name from, she replied, 'Neither my husband nor myself likes the name Eliza; so we thought we would spell it backwards!'"

Here, again, is one quite as odd in its way. The Rev. A. P. Wharton, Rector of Barham, tells us that "a person named Day christened a daughter 'Ann Easter Day,' and another, only two or three years ago, 'Constance Kent'—Smith, we will say. Although I reminded the parents that this was the name of a convicted murderer, it caused no change. Indeed, I believe it was the reason for its choice. Certainly there is no accounting for tastes, especially in names."

There is something very touching in a baptismal name recorded by Mr. J. M. Cowper, who, with reference to the name "Ann 'Easter Day," states that, "At Kingsdown in Kent, on December 28, 1581, or 1582, was baptised 'Inocent Day, the base borne sone of on (one) Day.' Before the year 1801 Easter is common as a variant of Esther."

He gives another curious note as to the non-use in past time of the name "Alfred" in Kent—"I have searched,"

he says, "many parish registers, dating from 1538 to 1800, and over twelve thousand marriage allegations, extending from 1568 to 1635, and have never found an Alfred, unless I may consider Alured (Alured Denne) as the exception, but this is the Latin form shortened."

Without explanation the following name would puzzle most people. I must take it for granted that it was a baptismal name, or rather the debased form of it. Dr. W. M. Young, dating from the Suffolk County Asylum, writes as follows:—"Some time ago a woman was admitted into this asylum, duly certified under the name of 'Protezay M——.' I was so puzzled by the apparently cabalistic character of the Christian name, that I made inquiry of the friends who accompanied her as to its origin, and, in reply, they unfolded a strange, eventful history. During infancy she had been deserted by her mother, and had been found on the roadside by a man named M——, who took her to his home and adopted her as his own. By way of 'a conceit which is pretty to see' (as Mr. Pepys would have said), this man ever afterwards spoke of her as his *protégée*. M——'s orthography, however, was not on the same elevated plane as his etymology—hence 'Protezay.'"

As in the case of "Cunazoa," already mentioned in the text, there is no reason to doubt as to the infant being baptised "*Protégée*."

Equally puzzling is a name mentioned by a gentleman writing from Castle Acre, Norfolk, as having been given to a child in that parish, in years not very long past. F. G. H. tells us that—"A child (a girl) was brought for baptism to my grandfather. When asked the name, the parent, to his surprise, replied, 'Emdiella.' 'There is no such name,' said my grandfather. 'Oh, yes, sir, there is; we saw it in

a book,' replied the woman. My grandfather at the time did not like to inquire further, but it turned out that she had found in an old grammar the four liquid letters, L.M.N.R., and had confused them into M.D.L.R. The child was, however, christened 'Emdiella.' "

The following example is a riddle indeed, and I must leave Mr. J. T. Squire of Keresford, Brunswick Road, Kingston Hill, who has given it to us, to interpret it himself. He states that, "In the parish registers of Wandsworth occurs the following entry of baptism:—'1689, October 28. Mickipheralphry, son of James Dandy, clerk, and Anne, his wife.' This peculiar name was brought under the notice of the members of the Surrey Archaeological Society, who visited the church in 1889, but no explanation of it could then be given. By a mere accident a solution, and satisfactory evidence of the correctness of it, was obtained under circumstances the relation of which would occupy too much of your space.

"It is a compound of the names Mickipher (a corruption of Nicephorus) and Alphery, which pertained to one who was the heir to the throne of Russia, but who was sent to this country to escape assassination, and who became rector at Woolley, in Huntingdonshire, and was ejected at the Revolution. One of his sons resided at Hammersmith, and another followed the occupation of a smith at Wandsworth, and had a son, Mitchafer, baptised there on the 18th of August, 1661. The registers down to 1787 were transcribed by me and printed in 1889."

"Venus" is not exactly what one would choose for a Christian name, yet it is not unknown. Thus a gentleman who, I am sorry to say, only gives his initials, G. M. T., writes:—"In a country parish, of which my father was rector some twenty-five years ago, there was a child who

rejoiced in the name of 'Venus.' I heard that when she was baptised the officiating clergyman remonstrated with the parents, on the ground that Venus was not a Christian name, but that of a heathen goddess. He was somewhat nonplussed, however, when reminded that the squire's wife was named Diana!

"In the same village two sisters (twins) were called Tryphena and Tryphosa, and Scriptural names had a decided preference—fully half the population were possessed of them. But in these times the taste for 'Ethel,' 'Percy,' and the like, has penetrated even to that remote quarter."

As regards this name of "Venus" a gentleman (J. E. C.) writes to say that, "In a Devonshire village church, some years ago, a male infant was presented for baptism, the sponsors naming it 'Vanus.' The clergyman protested that Venus was a heathen lady of doubtful reputation, and he refused to baptise the baby with such a name.

"'How could you think of such a name?' he asked. 'Well, zur, us wants to earn (call) him after his grandvather, and hers a called Vanus.' Subsequent investigation showed that the old man's name was Sylvanus, but all his life he had never been called anything but Vanus."

He adds that, "The village schoolmistress of a generation back, who had the honour of increasing the family of Smith by sixteen, determined that all her children should have the initials 'S. S.' Perhaps, when she took this resolution she hardly imagined she would have fifteen girls and one boy to provide names for. However, she managed to carry out her idea successfully. I cannot at this moment recall all the 'S's,' but her eldest was Sarah and the youngest Sabina."

Akin to this, a clergyman, who also unfortunately does

not give his name, writes as follows:—"My curate had to baptise twin sons of the surname of Otway; the first was called 'Orace 'Oratio,' and the other 'Oratio 'Orace.' I knew a family whose surname began with H., and all the fourteen children were to have three initial H.'s—so they included a 'Hagatha' and a 'Horizontal.'"

If any skilled antiquary were to spend a few days in searching the church books at Shoreditch, a number of curious facts might be discovered. The Rev. Frederick Cox, the vicar of St. Philip, Dalston, and who was formerly senior curate of Shoreditch parish church, gives some noteworthy examples of odd names which appear in the baptismal register there. He says:—"To give a few instances, Miss 'Juliet' Burbage was baptised in 1608, in all probability the daughter of the great theatrical celebrity of that time. In the same year 'Desdemona' Bishop was admitted within the fold of the Church; in 1591, 'Troilus' Skinner and 'Coriolanus' Hawke. In 1563, we find 'Evangelist' Hamerbon; and in 1704, three children were named 'Faith, Hope, and Charity.' In the year 1589, we find Shakespeare's name associated with Burbage as one of the shareholders of the Blackfriars Theatre."

The Rev. Turberville Evans, Vicar of Buckland, Dover, and son of the late Vicar of Shoreditch, describes how, "As children we were often in Shoreditch vestry in my father's day. Our great delight was to turn to an entry in the baptismal register. It ran thus—'Adelaide Louisa Theresa Thirza Amelia Maria Hughes.' Perhaps my friend Mr. Cox can supply the date. Can anyone interpret 'Mingaye Syder,' which occurs as a Christian name in our registers?"

We are indebted to Mr. John Hawkins, 22 Parliament Street, Westminster for the following item on baptismal

folklore:—"The negro, in keeping with a strong passion for 'loud' and flashy colours, is strangely enamoured of fine names. As an instance of this, a relative of mine, a clergyman in Demerara, was recently called upon to baptise the daughter of a well-to-do negro, but was astonished to find that the names selected by the fond father were 'Seriatim' 'Ad Valorem.'

"The reverend gentleman took the man to the vestry and remonstrated with him on the extraordinary appellations he desired to bestow upon his daughter, whereupon, with great reluctance, he consented to forego these high-sounding names which so charmed his ear, and eventually selected 'Drusilla Matilda.' The clergyman being unable to offer any valid reason against the latter choice, the child now rejoices in those names."

Let us come back to England, and to English names, but not too suddenly. Mr. W. J. Humble Crofts, writing from Waldron, Sussex, tells us that, "This parish boasts certain names which are possibly unique—'Psalms,' for example. But we have also an 'English' French, a 'Luther' Martin, and 'Philadelphias' galore, the prevalence of the latter arising from the fact that Philadelphia happens to be an old family name of the Hart Dykes, who for centuries have owned property here, and whose ancestresses stood as sponsors to the ancestresses of our present generation.

"A neighbouring parish affords a crucial example of the love of the labouring classes for classical or sesquipedalian names. One of the villagers had his three children christened 'Julius Cæsar,' 'Mark Anthony,' and 'Venus Pandora' respectively."

Dr. Samuel Hague, of Camberwell, records an odd combination of Christian and surnames. In filling up an official document one day a patient gave him the sur-

name of "Buxton." On being asked what his Christian name was, he replied "Truman Hanbury."

Equally odd as a combination is that recorded by Mr. W. F. Coulson of West Brighton, who states "that at the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Waterloo Road, S.E., early in the present year, a child was christened 'Christmas.' The parents' surname was 'Carroll.' Christmas Carroll is, I should think, unique."

Scriptural names of course are common, but I never before heard of one mentioned by the Rev. T. Roach, who says that a few years ago he "published the banns of marriage of a woman named 'Talitha Cumi' at St. Mary's, Ilchester, Somerset. He was told that it was a family name."

Speaking of Scriptural names, many of us have wondered whether a child has ever been christened "Kerenhappuch," which it will be remembered was the name of one of Job's daughters. Mr. Owen Davies, a Wesleyan minister at Blackheath, settles the question, for he tells us that the wife of his verger bears that name. He further states that one of the members of his congregation was christened "Cobden Bright Villiers," and that he knew a gentleman whose three uncles were named respectively "Ulysses Achilles," "Telemachus Shakespear," and "Copernicus."

The Rev. F. Case, Tudeley Vicarage, Kent, says that "all the following names occur in our registers. The child who was so unfortunate as to be named 'Cain' was born only fifty-nine years ago. He had a brother named 'Abel.' Males:—Maher, Lanzil, Josephus, Fane, Covel, Cain, Gurth, Immanuel John, Mahershalalhashbaz. Females:—Fillely, Vinefrit, Vimfid, Barbary, Valentina, Prince, Agnester,

Olife, Julian, Christian, Sibyll, Easter, Brigget, Eunice, Amer."

A friend tells me that in the church register of Scampton, Lincolnshire, about the year 1630, an entry occurs of the baptism of a girl named Linenia. Possibly flax may have been cultivated in the parish at that date.

It must surely be an uncommon thing to christen girls with boys' names, yet it is not altogether unknown. The *Gentleman's Magazine* of January, 1742, contains, amongst other announcements, the following:—"Lady of the deceased Alexander Nairn of a posthumous son. Had three daughters in 1740, christened James Agnes, Charles Amelia, Henry Margaret, all (in 1742) in good health."

Some odd combinations of Christian surnames have already been given, but an instance mentioned by Mr. E. Bruce, of Uckfield, Sussex, is especially remarkable. He says, "I have seen a good many curious names under the above heading, but none so curious as that owned by a child of a woman who was once my nurse. The surname was Waters, and the mother christened the child (a girl), Mineral. I believe 'Mineral Waters' is living, and is now about seventeen years old."

Unfortunately, an M. R. C. S. does not give the name of the parish to which he refers, when he says "that in the churchyard of the place where I first saw the light a tombstone announces the fact of the death of twins named 'Punch' and 'Judy.'"

The Vicar of Glossop notes that, "During the year 1887, I baptised a child at St. Mary's Church, Widnes, to whom

the name Jubilata was given, because she was born in the year of the Queen's Jubilee."

The Rev. Joseph Hargrove, of St. Matthews, Cambridge, remarks that although "Albert" is common enough, "Victoria" as a Christian name is almost unknown. He says, "In an experience of more than twenty years I cannot remember ever to have baptised a child by that name, or even to have met with anybody bearing it. Even in the Jubilee year, when loyalty ruled the thoughts of all, the name occurs only three times among two hundred and eight children baptised in this parish (in each case coupled with another name), and since then it has only appeared once among seven hundred and twenty-three baptisms. That the name of so popular a Queen, and of one who has reigned so long, should never have been able to displace in popular favour the names of former queens—Elizabeth, Mary, Anne—has always seemed to me a very remarkable instance of the tenacity with which the English people cling to old customs."

We now come to consider instances in which the names of flowers have been given to children at the font. "It was my good fortune recently," writes Mr. Philip Bartlett of Christ Church, Lancaster, "on a railway journey, to make the acquaintance of a perfect nosegay of children, all members of one family, and all justifying the sweetness of the names that had been given them—Daisy, May, Lily, Violet, and Olive. There had also been a sixth, Pansy, but she, I was informed, had been transplanted to a better and brighter garden than any on earth.

"There is, I may mention, a strong prejudice existing in some minds against naming children after flowers, on the ground that children so called are supposed, like flowers, to

be short lived. I hope my little travelling companions may, at any rate, belie the superstition.

"In addition to the other ethical names enumerated by your correspondents, I have baptised a child Repentance, who has proved one never to be repented of."

The name of the Bishop of Melbourne, Dr. Field Flowers Goe, will at once suggest itself to church folk in connection with floral names. In answer to the question, "Could we not find Myrtle and Rose Mary?" Mrs. or Miss Mary Flowers writes from Louth to say, "I have a cousin called Rose Mary, whose surname is Flowers. Her great-grandfather's name was Field Flowers."

Writing from Brancaster, Norfolk, Mr. C. G. R. Birch says, "I have baptised, on April 22, 1888, a 'Myrtle Rose'—unique, I believe; also, on February 7 of the present year, a 'Daisy Rhoda,' and on September 27, 1885, a 'Lilian May.' Indeed, Lilian, May, and Daisy, singly or in conjunction with something else, are now as common as possible here."

The following communication brings to light a very out-of-the-way name. "I have," says H. E. G., "a dear young friend somewhere in this country who (about eleven years ago) was christened Erica. 'Only that, and nothing more.' Her parents, it was rumoured, had plighted their troth 'Out in the sunshine over the heather.' Perhaps other instances may be quoted."

On the authority of Mr. A. C. Downer, St. Cuthbert's, Bedford, I am able to give the following:—"An infant was, twenty years ago, presented to me for baptism in an Oxford church, under the name 'Virgo Maria.' The godparents were ignorant of the meaning of the words, but

the mother, on being asked where they had obtained the name, replied, 'You see, sir, my husband is a gardener, and there is a geranium named "Virgo Maria," so we thought it would be a nice name for our little girl.'

"So 'Virgo Maria' must be added to the list of floral names. Could we not also find 'Myrtle' and 'Rose Mary'? 'Basil' is a boy's name. What of 'Flora,' goddess of flowers? The growing disuse of 'Jane' is much to be regretted."

A gentleman who does not give his name writes to say that he has a daughter whose names are "Violet Lily Rose." Another states that in 1887 he baptised the infant daughter of a Mr. Rose under the name "Violet." But these combinations are sometimes risky unless chosen with care, with a due regard to future possibilities. For instance, a Croydon correspondent tells us of a Miss Rose who was christened "Wild." For a time all went well, and "Wild Rose" was pretty enough, albeit somewhat sentimental. But young ladies as they grow up are apt to fall in love, and "Wild Rose" on her marriage changed her name to "Wild Bull."

I gave above an instance of three girls being christened with boys' names. Mr. H. F. Spencer, writing from Oxford, says that in a rural parish he remembers a young man who was called "Rose," his surname being "Cherry." The writer adds, "Hyacinth is sometimes, and Florence often given in England to girls, but in Ireland to boys." "Allow me," he says, "to quote from the 'Parish Register' of Crabbe, who, though a poet, observed more than he invented:—

" " 'Why Lonicera wilt thou name thy child?'
 I asked the Gardener's wife, in accents mild:
 'We have a right,' replied the sturdy dame;—
 And Lonicera was the infant's name.
 If next a son shall yield our Gardener joy,
 Then Hyacinthus shall be that fair boy;
 And if a girl, they will at length agree
 That Belladonna that fair maid shall be.'

Thus much for distinctly baptismal names, but there are some very odd ones to be found in the official register of births, which may or may not have been actually used at baptism. The correspondent who gives the following list begins by an interesting record of the comparative popularity of ordinary christian names, and he takes the great family of Smiths. In one quarter's index he finds as follows:—

“Elizabeth, 69 instances; George, 95; John, 125; Mary, 80; Sarah, 41; William, 130; and of the more modern names (that is, modern as to fashion), Albert, 61; Arthur, 49; Edith, 57; Ethel, 51; Florence, 69; Frederick, 53. Scripture names occurring are Absalom, Archelaus, Asher, Enoch, Ephraim, Miriam, Moses, etc. While as to floral names there are—Daisy, 14; Erica, Iris, Ivy, 4; Lily, 20; Olive, 6; Rose, 13; Violet, 9. The writer of your article suggests that the names of common English flowers are not well adapted for personal names; doubtless that is so, and yet I have met with Hollyhock, Lavender, Dahlia (not infrequently), and others of the like.

“Your article does not deal with eccentricity of naming, which affords a fruitful field for speculation as to the state of mind of persons who could give their children such names as, *e.g.*, ‘Boadicea’ Basher, ‘Ethereal’ Messenger, ‘Anno Domini’ Davies, ‘Liberal Heneage’ Brown, ‘Sardine’ Shaw, ‘Ether’ Spray, ‘Rose Shamrock’ Anthistle, ‘Smith Follows’ Smith. Surely there should be a society formed to ‘prevent cruelty in naming children.’”

A gentleman writing from the “General Register Office,” sends the following curious names or combinations of names (the last name is always the surname):—

“Morning Dew, Evening Dew, Winter Frost, Merry Christmas, Flower Apark, Manifold Light, Ruby Gore, Mid-

summer Frost, Orange Lemmon, Hailstone Pretty, Anglo-Saxon Joy, River Jordan, Cloud Hill, Happy Ephraim Jiggins, Happy Riches, Tamer Duck, Jubilee Gosling, John Hadnot Kiss, Just King, Nappy Igo, Holly Bush, Holley Bower, Charity Greedy, Offspring Dear, Gilderoy Scamp, Only Fancy William Brown, Jennyfer Penny, Colonel Sargeant, Sarah Alley Lunn, Hay Stack Brown, Hay Field, Noah Flood (a shipwright), Greenwood Woodman, Vernal Greenwood, Robert Alma Balakclava Inkerman Sebastopol Delhi Dugdale, and last and longest, Anna Bertha Cecilia Diana Emily Fanny Gertrude Hypatia Inez Jane Kate Louisa Maud Nora Ophelia Quince Rebecca Starkey Teresa Ulysis Venus Winifred Xenophon Yetty Zeus Pepper.

"These are all absolutely faithful copies of authentic names, without omission or alteration of any kind. The list could be indefinitely extended, but probably here are enough."

Here is another list from the records of the same office, concerning which the writer implies that it would be difficult to say whether they are to be attributed to the vanity, the ignorance, or the heartless cruelty of the parents who fixed upon them. This gentleman says:—

"I will give the years in which they have been met with, and I find, to make a start, a girl registered in 1847, 'Is it Maria;' 1853, 'Napoleon the Great;' 1857, 'Robert Alma Balakclava Inkerman Sebastopol Delhi;' 1860, 'Arthur Wellesley Wellington Waterloo;' 1861, 'Not Wanted James;' 1863, 'Jerome Napoleon Edward Henry John' (this an illegitimate child born in a workhouse); 1865, 'Edward Byng Tallyho Forward;' 1870, 'One Too Many;' 1877, 'Peter the Great,' and 'William the Conqueror,' twins; 1883, 'Richard Cœur de Lion Tyler Walter;' 1886, 'That's it who'd have thought it;' 1887, 'Laughing Waters.'

"Some remarkable single names are to be met with, such as 'Righteous,' 'Comfort,' 'Happy,' 'Electro,' 'Hopeful,' 'Redemption,' 'Meditation,' 'Obedience,' and 'Alphabet.' Twins, 'Love' and 'Unity,' are to be found, and besides 'Faith,' 'Hope,' and 'Charity' as triplets, there are 'Shadrach,' 'Meshach,' and 'Abednego,' boys, and two boys and a girl, 'Alpha,' 'Beatrice,' and 'Omega.'"

When I add that one of the latest combinations in this list is "Gladiolus Azalea," and that many children born of late years on April 19, have been named "Primrose," I have exhausted my stock of information, which I venture to think is curious enough to justify me in putting it upon more or less permanent record.

THE END.

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